JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN
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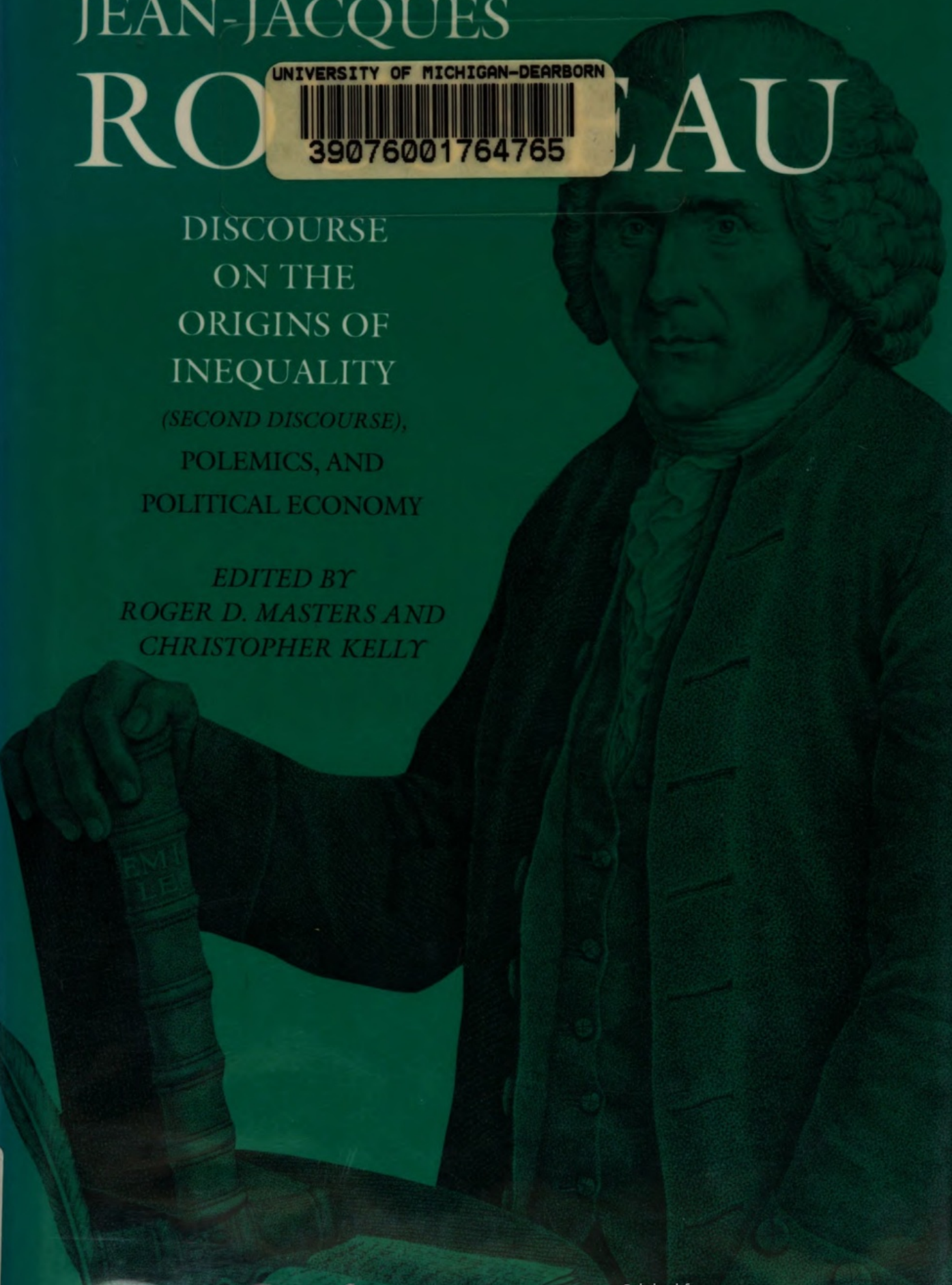
DISCOURSE ON THE ORIGINS OF INEQUALITY

(SECOND DISCOURSE),

POLEMICS, AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

EDITED BY
ROGER D. MASTERS AND
CHRISTOPHER KELLY



The Collected Writings of
ROUSSEAU

Volume 3

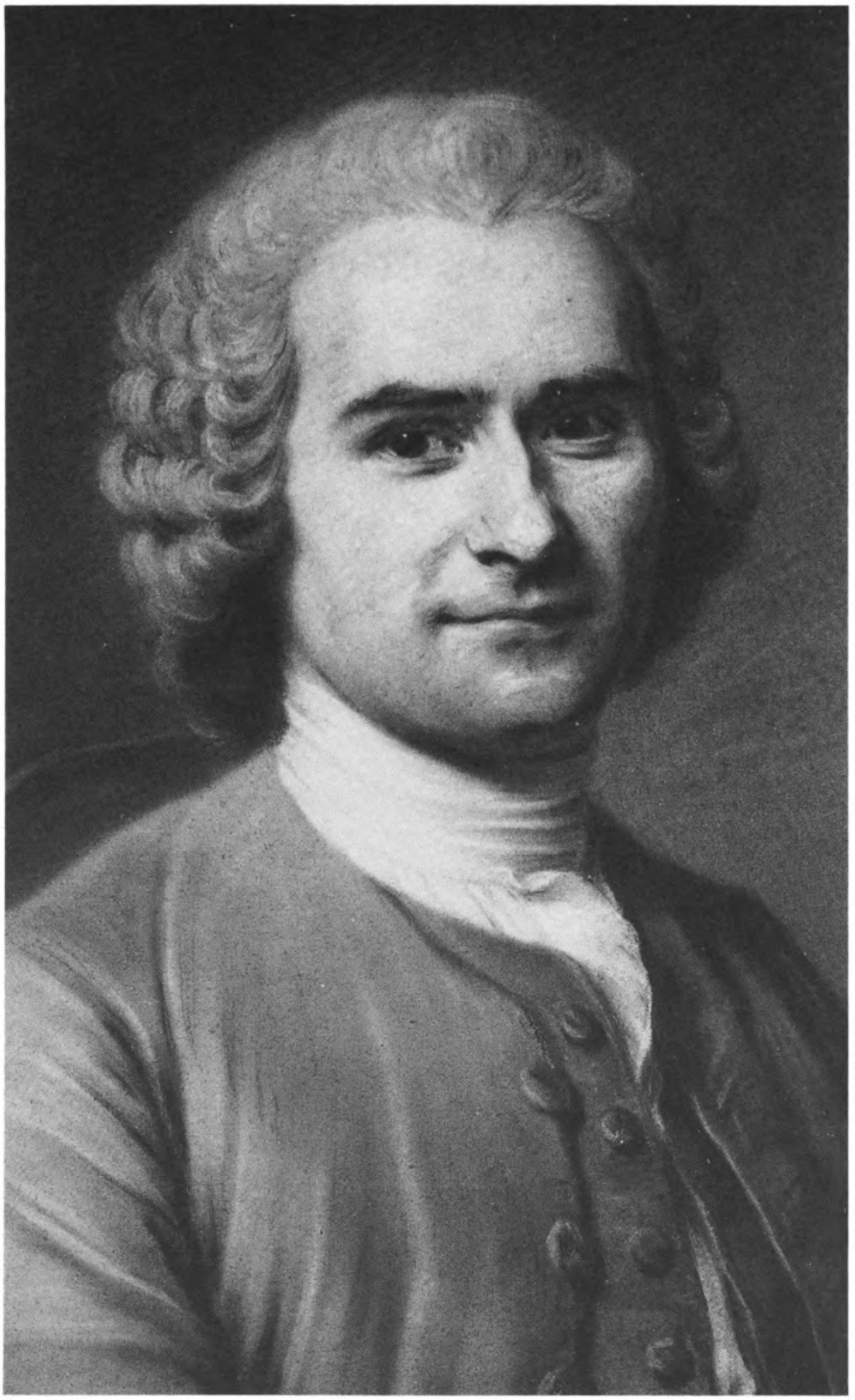
In 1755, Rousseau questioned theories of political and moral obligation inherited from the classics of both pagan Greek and medieval Christian philosophy. In the *Second Discourse* he argued—a century before Darwin—that humans developed from naturally peaceful animals without language, social institutions, or moral obligations. He emphasizes two apparently contradictory models: the individual's independence in the original state of nature, and the citizen's virtue in a republic under laws enacted by the sovereign people. Common to these ideals are the concepts of equality and freedom which heavily influenced the French republican tradition and came to dominate modern political rhetoric. In contemporary terms, Rousseau's principles are "democratic" and "revolutionary." Although most moderns who emphasize these principles argue that historical progress is likely and beneficial, Rousseau rejects such optimism. As a result, he offers a profound and unsettling alternative to opinions on both the left and the right.

Volume 3 contains the *Second Discourse* (complete with Rousseau's extensive notes), contemporary critiques by Voltaire, Diderot, Bonnet, and LeRoy along with Rousseau's replies (some never before translated), and the *Political Economy*, which outlines for the first time the principles which were to become famous in the *Social Contract*. This is the first time that the works of 1755 and 1756 have been combined with careful commentary to show the coherence of Rousseau's "political system."

DISCOURSE ON THE ORIGINS OF INEQUALITY

(SECOND DISCOURSE)

POLEMICS AND POLITICAL ECONOMY



JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU

DISCOURSE ON THE ORIGINS OF INEQUALITY

(SECOND DISCOURSE)

POLEMICS, AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

THE COLLECTED WRITINGS OF ROUSSEAU
Vol. 3

EDITED BY
ROGER D. MASTERS AND CHRISTOPHER KELLY

TRANSLATED BY
JUDITH R. BUSH, ROGER D. MASTERS,
CHRISTOPHER KELLY, AND TERENCE MARSHALL

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE
PUBLISHED BY UNIVERSITY PRESS OF NEW ENGLAND
HANOVER AND LONDON

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE
Published by University Press of New England, Hanover, NH *03755*
© 1992 by the Trustees of Dartmouth College
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Printed in the United States of America *5 4 3 2 1*
CIP *data appear at the end of the book*

This publication has been supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, an independent federal agency.

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Preface

Although Jean-Jacques Rousseau is a significant figure in the Western tradition, there is no standard edition of his major writings available in English. Unlike those of other thinkers of comparable stature, moreover, many of Rousseau's important works either have never been translated or have become unavailable. The present edition of the *Collected Writings of Rousseau* is intended to remedy this situation.

Our goal is to produce a series that can provide a standard reference for scholarship that is accessible to all those wishing to read broadly in the corpus of Rousseau's work. To this end, the translations seek to combine care and faithfulness to the original French text with readability in English. Although, as every translator knows, there are often passages where it is impossible to meet both of these criteria at the same time, readers of a thinker and writer of Rousseau's stature deserve texts that have not been deformed by the interpretive bias of the translators or editors. Wherever possible, existing translations of high quality have been used, although in some cases the editors have felt minor revisions were necessary to maintain the accuracy and consistency of the English versions. Where there was no English translation (or none of sufficient quality), a new translation has been prepared.

Each text is supplemented by editorial notes that clarify Rousseau's references and citations or passages otherwise not intelligible. Although these notes do not provide as much detail as is found in the critical apparatus of the Pléiade edition of the *Oeuvres complètes*, the English-speaking reader should nevertheless have in hand the basis for a more careful and comprehensive understanding of Rousseau than has hitherto been possible.

For Volume 3, we have focused on Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origins and Foundations of Inequality* (often called his *Second Discourse*), the polemical exchanges between Rousseau and his critics that immediately followed its publication in 1755, and the article on *Political Economy* (which appeared in the same year). According to Rousseau himself, the *Second Discourse* is one of his "major" works and the first to present, openly, his radical view that humans had evolved from an asocial, animal-like state of nature.

Unlike the attacks on the *First Discourse*, whose authors are not widely known, the major criticisms of Rousseau's *Second Discourse* were by leading thinkers of the time: Voltaire, Diderot, Charles Bonnet (an important figure in the development of evolutionary theory), and Charles-Georges LeRoy (naturalist and keeper of the Gardens at Versailles). Rousseau's exchanges with these contemporaries provide a deeper understanding of the issues posed in his daring analysis of the evolution of human sociability.

This volume of the *Collected Writings* concludes with Rousseau's *Political Economy*, which appeared along with Diderot's *Natural Right* in the fifth volume of the *Encyclopedia* (published in 1755). Whereas the *Second Discourse* seems at first to challenge all civilized society in the name of natural goodness, *Political Economy* outlines Rousseau's celebrated concept of the "general will," later elaborated as the foundation of legitimate government in the *Social Contract*.

These texts from the years 1755–1756 played a central role in the elaboration of Rousseau's thought, revealing the connections between apparently diverse elements in his philosophical "system." The works grouped in Volume 3 of the *Collected Writings* are thus extremely important for understanding Rousseau's thought as well as invaluable for the student of Western intellectual history in the eighteenth century.

March 1992

R.D.M.
C.K.

Chronology of Works in Volume 3

1712

June 28: Jean-Jacques Rousseau born in Geneva.

1728

Rousseau leaves Geneva; ultimately settles in Chambéry with Mme de Warens and pursues his self-education.

1742

Rousseau first arrives in Paris. Meets leading musicians, writers, and scientists and, after two years as Secretary to the French ambassador to Venice, returns to Paris and collaborates with Diderot.

1749

October: The Academy of Dijon proposes the topic, "Has the restoration of the sciences and arts tended to purify morals?" for its prize competition.

1750

July: The Academy of Dijon awards Rousseau the prize for his *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts*.

1751

January: Probable date of the publication of the *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts* (later called his *First Discourse*).

1753

November: Academy of Dijon announces contest for the prize in moral philosophy on the subject, "What is the source of inequality among men, and whether it is authorized by natural law."

1754

Rousseau works on *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality (Second Discourse)* and on the article on "Political Economy" for the *Encyclopedia*.

1755

Publication of *Second Discourse* and Volume V of the *Encyclopedia* (including both Diderot's "Natural Right" and Rousseau's "Political Economy"). Rousseau exchanges correspondence with Voltaire

(August–September). Charles Bonnet writes *Letter from Mr. Philopolis* (August), which is published in *Mercury* in October. Earthquake in Lisbon (November 1).

1756

Voltaire publishes *Poem on the Disaster of Lisbon* (March) and has a copy sent to Rousseau (July). Rousseau's correspondence with Voltaire (August–September). Rousseau receives LeRoy's *Observations* on his *Second Discourse* from Condillac.

1758

Publication of *Letter to Mr. d'Alembert*.

1761

Publication of Rousseau's novel, *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse*.

1762

Publication of *Emile* and *Social Contract*. Rousseau's condemnation by the Parlement of Paris and his flight.

1772

Rousseau begins *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques* (the *Dialogues*).

1778

July 2: Rousseau dies at Ermenonville.

Introduction

From the *Second Discourse* to the *Political Economy*:
the Elaboration of Rousseau's "System"

Jean-Jacques Rousseau has been one of the most controversial figures in the history of Western political thought. Often attacked on the grounds of "contradictions" perceived in his writings, Rousseau himself claimed that these charges reflected superficial readings of what he himself called a "sad but true system," albeit one of "paradox." As early as 1753—three years after the publication of the *Discourse on the Sciences and Arts* (or *First Discourse*), Jean-Jacques made it clear that he had foreseen the controversies that were to surround his work, warning careful readers to look for the consistent principles beneath what might seem to be contradictory assertions.[1]

At the end of his life, Rousseau repeated the claim that his thought forms a "system" devoted to the "principle that nature made man happy and good, but that society depraves him and makes him miserable."[2] The same "principle" was described in a now famous letter to Malesherbes written in January 1762, shortly before the *Social Contract* was published.[3] One is entitled to ask why readers have so often been confused by an author who claimed to have developed a "system" of thought based on a single "principle" discovered in a moment of "illumination."

From Calvinist Geneva to the *First Discourse*: Rousseau's Challenge to the Enlightenment

To understand Rousseau's political thought, it is well to begin by explaining the *First Discourse* and the controversy it generated. How was it that a sixteen-year-old apprentice who had fled Geneva in 1728 with nothing but the shirt on his back became one of the most important writers and thinkers of his century? Who was this outsider whose challenge to the intellectual establishment of mid-eighteenth-century Europe began with an attack on the enlightenment but led to a deeper critique of the premises of science, politics, and religion?

The story of Rousseau's life has often been told.[4] Because his mother died from complications at his birth, Jean-Jacques was brought up by his

aunt and his father before becoming an unhappy apprentice. One Sunday, after tarrying too long on a walk in the country and finding the city's gates locked for the night, he fled Calvinist Geneva to avoid a beating from his master. Self-educated after converting to Catholicism and becoming the lover of Mme de Warens in Chambéry, Rousseau ultimately found his way to Paris. Armed with a system of musical notation that he hoped would make him famous, Jean-Jacques became the familiar of Parisian salons and the best friend of Denis Diderot, whose massive project for the *Encyclopedia* made him the center of the movement known as the "philosophes" in which the leading writers, scientists, and artists worked actively in favor of popular enlightenment.

Diderot's enthusiastic support of the spread of science and technology implied a secular rationalism with regard to the orthodoxies of religion and politics. To challenge the traditional argument that the visible order of the natural world demonstrated the existence of God, Diderot suggested that such reasoning would lead a blind man to become an atheist.[5] The establishment reacted, imprisoning Diderot for blasphemy. In October 1749, as Jean-Jacques walked to the Prison of Vincennes to visit his friend, he stopped to read the *Mercure de France* and read the announcement of the year's Prize Competition of the Academy of Dijon; after what he later called "the Illumination of Vincennes," Jean-Jacques decided to enter with an essay denouncing the sciences and arts as a source of corruption and slavery.

Rousseau's *Discourse on the Sciences and the Arts* posed a dual challenge to the civilization in which he lived. On the one hand, he openly attacked the enlightenment project of spreading science, art, and technology: far from ushering in a world of progress and freedom, the life's work of Diderot and his friends was condemned as a source of moral degeneration and despotic government. On the other hand, however, Rousseau harshly criticized the traditional establishment: the French monarchy, supposedly based on divine right, was described as "slavery," and the aristocratic class system on which it rested was challenged in the name of the "natural equality for which men seem to have been born."[6]

Not surprisingly, the *First Discourse* was greeted with hostility and controversy. Indeed, the polemics surrounding that work provide a panorama of European thought in the middle of the eighteenth century.[7] Some of Rousseau's critics attacked him for mistreating science and the principles of secular thought on which it rests; others criticized his argument on the grounds that it challenged the political and moral order still dominated by the Church and hereditary monarchy. Most were sur-

prised if not scandalized by a work using historical and scientific scholarship to condemn the work of historians and scientists.

Rousseau's rejoinders make it clear that he was a spirited and lucid writer who had expected to create a storm with his open hostility to prevailing opinions. Emphasizing the difference between science in itself and the public dissemination of scientific research and artistic endeavor, Rousseau insisted that the evaluation of human history be placed in a moral and political context. By implication, Rousseau challenged civilization itself. In the *First Discourse*, he had praised "the simplicity of the image of the earliest times" as a "lovely shore, adorned by the hands of nature alone."[8] When a critic suggested that Rousseau reduced human life to animal instinct, he replied that it was better to be an innocent animal than a wicked, reasoning being.[9] Whereas his contemporaries, like most people today, believed in progress—and hence in the desirability of social and political "development" in Africa, Asia, and the New World, Rousseau expressed open hostility to the destruction of the preliterate or "primitive" cultures that were encountered by European travelers and settlers.[10] If his critics praised classical antiquity, it was with the brilliant thinkers and artists of Athens in mind; Rousseau dared claim that it was warlike Sparta or republican Rome, not urbane Athens, that provides the model of republican virtue—a model so sharply at odds with political practice that it called into question the legitimacy of the monarchical governments that dominated Europe.

The *Second Discourse*

In 1753, Rousseau brought the polemic to a conclusion by publishing his youthful play, *Narcissus: Or the Lover of Himself*, with a preface summarizing his position. By this time, he was an established figure in French literary circles. Still an active collaborator with Diderot on the *Encyclopedia*, Jean-Jacques felt increasingly sure of himself as a writer and thinker. When the Academy of Dijon announced its essay competition for 1754, with the provocative title "What is the origin of inequality among men, and is it authorized by natural law,"[11] Rousseau found the occasion for a bolder and more open statement of his thought.

Rousseau was quite aware that his essay, which he later described as "a work of the greatest importance," would be anathema to traditionalists.[12] Generally called his *Second Discourse*, Rousseau's *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men* is divided into four main sections: the Dedication, the Preface, and the two Parts of the body of

the Discourse. In addition, there are a number of important notes appended to the text, written for readers "who have the courage to begin again."[13]

The Dedication, written after the work was completed, praises the city of Geneva as a virtuous republic that satisfies all the requirements of the community that Rousseau would have chosen for his native land. This praise is couched in terms sufficiently extravagant to permit one to question its sincerity. Although Rousseau explicitly refers to the Romans (not the Genevans) as the "model of all free peoples,"[14] there is no doubt that the Dedication implies that the best political system is that of a small city-state in which the body of patriotic citizens is sovereign.[15]

The short, important Preface insists that the fundamental problem of political philosophy lies in the nature of man and the status of natural law. Rousseau thereby broadens his topic from the origin of inequality per se to the underlying basis of all standards of right and justice. Rousseau rejects previous notions of natural law on the grounds that philosophers have as yet failed to discover the true nature of man: "so long as we do not know natural man, we would try in vain to determine the law he has received" (i.e., the law of nature).[16] In particular, it appears that no attention need be paid to "the ancient philosophers, who seem to have tried their best to contradict each other on the most fundamental principles."[17]

Having thus questioned the validity of all traditionally accepted notions of natural law, Rousseau turns in the First Part to an examination of man in the genuine "state of nature," which existed prior to the formation of the first human societies.[18] He argues that man, living according to purely natural impulsions outside of society, was essentially a stupid but peaceful animal. Hobbes was wrong in supposing a natural state of war among men. Rousseau's criticism of Hobbes is, however, built on Hobbesian assumptions; natural man is impelled by the principle of self-preservation and is not guided by innate reason as was assumed by those who followed Aquinas and the Great Tradition.

Hobbes's error, according to Rousseau, was that he imputed to "natural man" a number of qualities—foresight, pride, and fear of violent death—that are the product of society and not of nature. Man in the state of nature was not a "wicked child" but a "good" animal who never harmed another unless his own preservation was at stake. Rousseau goes further and suggests that Hobbes's basic natural principle of self-preservation was moderated by natural compassion, which is present in animals. From these two principles of natural man—self-preservation and

compassion—Rousseau claims at the outset that he can establish all the principles of natural right, "without the necessity of introducing [the principle] of sociability" assumed in the philosophical tradition of Aristotle, Cicero, and Aquinas.[19] It follows that the classical thinkers of the West do not provide the basis for a true understanding of the law of nature.[20]

In the Second Part of the *Discourse*, Rousseau traces the "hypothetical history" of the origin of political society and social inequality as it developed out of the egalitarian independence of the state of nature. Changes in the human species, which took an incredibly long time, eventually led to the building of huts, the establishment of the family, the development of language, crafts, and arts, the emergence of pride and deception, and the invention of metallurgy and agriculture; finally the development of social cooperation resulted in the need to divide land and differentiate the work of one man from that of another.

Inequalities (especially inequalities of possessions) were thus created among men who, in the pure state of nature, had been equal. As men learned to think and calculate, they became fully aware of these inequalities and opposed one another in violent competition for the material means of existence. Hobbes's "war of all against all" was the product of historical development rather than the true "state of nature," but such a war, which essentially opposed the rich against the poor, did occur, and its effects led to the foundation of civil society.

In the "state of nature" (i.e., prior to the establishment of political society) each man was his own judge; there was no superior to enforce any "laws." When men found their very existence threatened by violence in the warlike "last stages of the state of nature," they were inevitably led to conclude a "social contract"; a political community was founded to judge conflicts between individuals, transforming mere possession into a lawful right to property and making possible the enforcement of standards of law and order.

In the *Second Discourse*, Rousseau merely sketches the fundamental character of the political order created by the social contract:

> The People having, on the subject of Social relations, united all their wills into a single one, all the articles on which this will is explicit become so many fundamental Laws obligating all members of the State without exception, and one of these Laws regulates the choice and power of Magistrates charged with watching over the execution of the others.[21]

Here we find the essence of the teaching of the *Social Contract*, though the "single will" is not yet described as the "general will" (as it is in

Rousseau's most famous work). Despite claims by some that there is a basic difference between the *Social Contract* and the *Second Discourse*,[22] the two works can be shown to be thoroughly consistent.[23]

Within the *Discourse*, however, Rousseau does not stop to analyze the principles of legitimate government in detail; rather, he is concerned with a longer historical perspective that includes the ultimate establishment of unjust, tyrannical rule—"the last stage of inequality."[24]

> If we follow the progress of inequality in these different revolutions, we shall find that the establishment of the Law and of the Right of property was the first stage; the institution of the Magistracy [i.e., governments] the second; the third and last was the changing of legitimate power into arbitrary power.[25]

The history of society passes through a stage of legitimate government under law, to terminate in the most extreme and indefensible inequality possible, under which the powerful oppress the weak within political society. Such a situation, according to Rousseau, is no better than a "war of all against all"; an illegitimate and despotic government can have no legitimate objection to its own overthrow. There is an absolute right to revolution.

The radical implications of Rousseau's *Second Discourse*, although not difficult to infer from this position, deserve emphasis. Unjust government, in which a ruler is not subordinate to popularly enacted law, is illegitimate as well as contrary to nature; because "it is manifestly against the Law of Nature . . . that a child command an old man,"[26] hereditary monarchy apparently has no rational sanction that justifies obedience. This does not mean that Rousseau himself preached the desirability of revolution, but he does deprive most existing governments of their philosophic respectability.[27]

Criticism of the existing state of human society as morally corrupt has often been identified as the core of Rousseau's teaching.[28] Here it is important to indicate the extent of Rousseau's attack on the vices of society, for he by no means limits his criticism to the corruption particular to the eighteenth century. On the contrary, Rousseau raises the more fundamental question of whether or not society itself, as well as the institution of property on which it is based, is good for the human species. Humans in the state of nature were not virtuous, as true virtue requires control over natural impulsions and therefore depends on thought and social experience. But, by nature, they are good—self-sufficient, compassionate to others when they pose no threat, and incapable of pride, hatred, falsehood, and vice. Society, precisely because it develops their faculties, corrupts them.

It was often said of the *Second Discourse* that it challenged civilized people to return to the forests to live as beasts. Rousseau rejected this criticism and never failed to insist that his analysis was merely intended to provide a sound philosophic basis for understanding the human species, nature, and society. Nonetheless, it should be evident that Rousseau radically rejects all accepted, traditional justifications for the existence of political society and natural law. Human nature does not include an innate reason that leads to an understanding of and obedience to natural law (as the Christian tradition derived from Aristotle—and epitomized by Bordes's criticism of the *First Discourse*[29]—insisted); the natural man is an animal who follows natural impulses without thinking. Property, although indeed a basis of political society, is open to profound criticism as the cause of "crimes, wars, murders . . . miseries and horrors."[30] Society itself is not a blessing for humans, who are not "political and social animals" by their very nature (as taught by Aquinas). For Rousseau, the Great Tradition was untenable as it stood.

Rousseau's Correction of the Classics on the Basis of the Moderns

It has been suggested that Rousseau's *First Discourse* can best be understood as a criticism of the modern conception of politics; only the classical philosophers, who distinguished between knowledge and opinion, were properly aware of the possibility of a truly virtuous political community. In contrast, the *Second Discourse* sharply undermines the notions—derived from the classics of Greek and medieval Christian philosophy—on which society and justice were traditionally based in the eighteenth century. How can these seemingly opposed viewpoints have been formulated by one man within the space of five years? More specifically, how can the humble virtue of the patriotic citizen be preferred to the enlightenment of the *philosophe* when society itself—and therefore the very possibility of patriotism—is criticized as "unnatural" and corrupting?

Here it is only possible to sketch an answer. Rousseau attempted to preserve the great insights of Greek philosophy by placing them on the foundations of a modern tradition which, from its inception, had attempted to refute the classical outlook. That is, he tried to reestablish the conclusions of Plato on Hobbesian premises, even though the latter had been directed against classic (and hence Platonic) philosophy.[31] Rousseau did this by insisting on understanding the historical process by which political life came into existence. He defends the superiority of the

classical notion of virtue while asserting that virtue is the product of a historical development of the human species away from a natural state of merely animal "goodness."

Society is not natural, and because true virtue presupposes society, virtue is not natural. Before rational standards of justice—what Aquinas called "natural law"—can come into being, men must leave the state of nature and create human society. The formation of political communities is thus prior to justice and to some extent independent of it; brute force, deceit, and violence may be the necessary means of establishing the just society.[32] But once formed, there is a necessary logic that underlies political society and permits the philosopher to distinguish between "legitimate power" and "arbitrary power" or tyranny. The emergence of society can thus only be understood on the basis of the assumptions of Hobbes and modern political thought, whereas the proper ordering of an existing political society must take into consideration the principles of classical philosophy.

There are two kinds of natural law or natural right: one is the law of physical nature, which operates whether or not human reason has discovered it; the other is the law of rational man, operating only after it has been discovered by reasoning men within society. The first kind of natural right precedes civil society, the second presupposes it as natural.[33] Although these two kinds of natural law had almost always been opposed to each other as mutually exclusive alternatives, Rousseau, with extraordinary audacity, tries to show that they are not necessarily inconsistent.

The attempt to reestablish the classical understanding of politics on a modern foundation entailed an important shift in emphasis that distinguishes Rousseau's thought from Plato's and Aristotle's. Whereas the great thinkers of Greek antiquity had stressed the importance of the political order within which citizens can become virtuous, Rousseau's conception of the state of nature leads him to emphasize freedom as the criterion for judging human affairs. Thus, in the *Social Contract*, a political regime must preserve "civil liberty," the social substitute for the "natural liberty" abandoned when men left the state of nature.[34] This change from virtue to freedom as the primary concern of political thought explains why Rousseau, who perhaps understood the classic philosophers better than any of his contemporaries, has remained one of the most influential thinkers of modern times.

Rousseau's conception of human nature and social cooperation is thus a well thought-out attempt to resolve an issue that had divided Western philosophers for centuries. Because humans were originally isolated, he agrees with Hobbes that they are basically selfish but adds that their

stupidity and independence at first prevented this selfishness from taking the form of vanity or wickedness. And because man is naturally good, Rousseau agrees with Plato and Aristotle that there is a natural standard for judging human behavior—only this standard is a minimal one of refraining from uselessly harming others. Because all society is the result of an evolutionary process, the natural definition of "goodness" must be based on instinct or feeling, not reason, and must suit a solitary animal lacking speech and forethought.

This approach to human nature can be restated in terms of two basic concepts: natural freedom and the social contract. First, men are by nature free. Indeed, the absence of any moral, rational, or political laws governing human behavior is a definition of the state of nature; as Rousseau puts it in both the *Second Discourse* and the *Social Contract*, freedom is the "quality" of being a man.[35] Second, it follows that all social obligations must result from an agreement between individuals who were originally—and who remain in principle—free agents. The technical term for the act that creates a civil society with morally binding laws and duties is the "social contract." Hence the title of Rousseau's most famous work of political philosophy can be read as a shorthand reference to his definition of human nature.

Rousseau's Political "System" and the *Second Discourse*

From the perspective of the *Second Discourse*, political institutions—like the complex societies they govern—are a historical accident. If humans were by nature not only equal but isolated and totally independent, all forms of social constraint are the product of a transformation and corruption of our "natural goodness." Yet Rousseau's own preferences, as outlined in the Preface to the *Second Discourse*, point to something like Sparta or Republican Rome as the best political regime precisely because, in these ancient city-states, the virtuous citizen subordinated his private self-interest to the good of the community.

Not surprisingly, many commentators and readers have been puzzled by the apparent contradiction between Rousseau's radically individualistic view of human nature and his communitarian—some would even say "totalitarian"—political ideal.[36] One solution of some scholars has been to argue that Rousseau himself changed his mind between the time he wrote the *Second Discourse* in 1754 and the publication of his *Social Contract* in 1762.[37] Consideration of what he wrote in 1755 and 1756 challenges this interpretation, providing strong evidence to support Jean-Jacques's claim that his thought forms a coherent "system."

As soon as the *Second Discourse* appeared, it encountered a number of criticisms. Several of these exchanges, included in the current volume, give us valuable perspective on Rousseau's conception of human nature and its relationship to his political preferences. The first major comment came in an ironic letter from Voltaire, perhaps the most famous writer of the day, acknowledging what he called Rousseau's "new book against the human race" and explaining that although "one acquires the desire to walk on all fours when one reads your work," it is no longer possible for him to do so.[38] Although Voltaire goes on to agree, acknowledging with Rousseau that the arts and letters have caused many problems, he attributes such evils to general human follies rather than to the historical account of human corruption presented in the *Second Discourse*.

To avoid conflict, Rousseau's reply, dated September 10, 1755, studiously ignores Voltaire's irony and reasserts the basic distinction between the possibility of scientific knowledge and the moral corruption that results from attempts to produce general public enlightenment. Although respectful, Rousseau is clearly not intimidated by the implicit criticism by his famous correspondent.[39] In 1756, after Voltaire published his "Poem on the Disaster in Lisbon," an attack on the doctrine of providence that could be viewed as a continuation of the criticism of Rousseau's concept of "natural goodness,"[40] Rousseau sent his famous contemporary an even longer letter, setting forth a detailed defense of the regularity and order of nature. In place of Voltaire's tolerant and bemused skepticism, Rousseau boldly asserts that nature is in principle always "subject to the precision of quantities and of forms": the contrary view, according to Rousseau, necessarily implies "that there are some actions without a principle and some effects without a cause, which is repugnant to all philosophy" (or, as we would say today, to all natural science).[41] In short, Rousseau counters Voltaire's attack on the doctrine of providence with the argument that the order of nature is real and, in principle albeit not in practice, knowable by scientific or philosophic reason. It is worth noting that in this dispute with the popularizer of Newton, it is Rousseau who defends modern physics as well as providence.

A second critique was by a Genevan naturalist Charles Bonnet, writing under the pen name "Philopolis" (lover of the city).[42] For Bonnet, humans are naturally social beings as can be proven by showing that the "state of society results immediately from the faculties of man"; to challenge this conclusion is blasphemy: " *The savage man* of Mr. Rousseau, that man that he favors with such indulgence, is not at all *the man* that GOD wanted to make: but God made *orangutans* and *monkeys* who are not men."[43] As species were specially created in accordance with the ac-

count in the book of *Genesis*, so human nature is the result of divine will rather than evolution or perfectibility. Society is therefore the "destiny of our being" instead of the fatal accident described in the *Second Discourse*.

Although Rousseau chose not to publish a reply to Bonnet,[44] his draft of a rejoinder (the *Letter to Philopolis*) throws valuable light on his thought. Rousseau admits that, in a sense, "society is natural" to humans just as old age and decrepitude are natural to our species but then adds:

> The entire difference is that the state of old age is derived from the nature of man alone, and that of society is derived from the nature of the human race, not immediately as you say but only, as I have proved, with the help of certain external circumstances that may or may not happen, or at least occur sooner or later and consequently speed up or slow down the progress.[45]

Insofar as the circumstances leading to civilization, corruption and slavery are under human control, it is as foolish to act in ways that hasten this loss of freedom and vigor as it would be for a young man to take a pill that hastened the process of aging.

Rousseau's draft rejects Bonnet's theologically based argument by comparing it to the arguments of Leibniz and Pope that "everything that is, is good." Unlike Voltaire, whose reaction is the derisive irony of *Candide*,[46] Rousseau takes the theological objection seriously and gives a reasoned reply to it:

> For the same reason that everything is good as it is, if someone attempts to change the state of things, it is good that he attempts to change it, and whether it is good or bad for him to be successful is something that can be learned only from the outcome and not from reason . . . if everything is good as it is, everything was good as it was before there were Governments and Laws. It was therefore at least superfluous to establish them, and then Jean-Jacques would have had an easy time of it against Philopolis with your system.[47]

Scientific or philosophic reasoning leads to a naturalistic assessment of human nature, and not to speculative judgments that presume to reflect God's providence. The same principles underlie Rousseau's disagreement with the skeptical Voltaire and the religious Bonnet.[48]

A third challenge came in a private communication from a naturalist who was probably Charles-Georges LeRoy, head of the Gardens at Versailles and a contributor to the *Encyclopedia*. Because these remarks were forwarded to Rousseau by Condillac with the indication that Buffon also agreed with them,[49] they reflect the scientific thinking of the leading biologists of the day. LeRoy had several major objections to the description of the pure state of nature in the First Part of the *Second Discourse*. He began by arguing that early humans could not have survived the long

winters if they were frugivorous; to this, Rousseau replied that "for more than half of the earth, there is almost no winter" and that, if human origins were in the temperate climates, the diet of our ancestors need not have required meat.

Then LeRoy objected to Rousseau's argument that because carnivores can nourish their offspring more easily than herbivores, they are likely to have larger numbers of young. After citing some examples, LeRoy adds "One always supposes that everything is well regulated in nature. Confirm your facts, and you will see perhaps that everything is not well regulated."[50] After Rousseau presents evidence to the contrary, he adds a particularly telling remark:

> Besides, whatever can be observed about particular facts, the proof that all is well organized is taken from a general and incontestable fact, which is that all the species continue to exist. But I understand that we can often be wrong, and myself especially, about the choice and application of the rules.[51]

The objection to Philopolis's notion of a *providential* order does not mean a denial of *natural* order; although Rousseau admits to the limits of his own knowledge, he asserts that the continued survival of species reflects reasons akin to what we now call the neo-Darwinian principle of "natural selection."

A fourth and perhaps more galling objection came from Rousseau's erstwhile friend Diderot. In Volume V of the *Encyclopedia*, Diderot included an article of his own on the concept of "Natural Right" (*Droit Naturel*). In this article, Diderot attacks the reasoning of someone who adopts the Hobbesian argument that because each individual in the state of nature has the right to self-preservation, the natural condition of mankind is a war of all against all. In so doing, Diderot refers to the version of the argument in Rousseau's *Second Discourse*—and, as the first draft of the *Social Contract* or *Geneva Manuscript* makes clear, Rousseau accepted responsibility for that argument.

According to Diderot, anyone who reasons as Rousseau had done in the *Second Discourse* should be viewed as a "violent reasoner" who deserves to be "stifled" by civilized people if he doesn't listen to the enlightened arguments in favor of moral obligations toward others. In *Natural Right*, these duties are said to come from the "general will" of the human species, a will that is reflected in "the written principles of Right of all civilized nations" and discovered by "a pure act of the understanding which reasons in the silence of the passions."[52] For Diderot, it is inappropriate to derive natural right from a condition of "animality" because "the animals are separate from us by invariable and eternal barriers."[53]

In other words, Diderot seeks to derive rights and duties from a rationally discoverable *consensus mundi* similar to that of the "natural law" tradition.

Rousseau's full answer to this objection came in the first draft of the *Social Contract* or *Geneva Manuscript*, where he explicitly adopts the role Diderot had derisively called the "violent reasoner."[54] But in the article on *Political Economy*, published in the same Volume of the *Encyclopedia* as Diderot's *Natural Right*, Rousseau outlines what will become his mature understanding of what he carefully calls "political right" (as distinct from either "natural right" or "natural law"). After attacking the view that the family provides a natural model for the State, Rousseau argues that the "general will" is the principle that unifies political communities and embodies "the common good." For Rousseau, however, such a general will is inherently opposed to the "private interest" or will of the individuals composing any group, and these private interests, at least for individuals, are derived from nature, whereas the "general will" depends on human conventions.[55]

Unlike Diderot, therefore, Rousseau argues that the "general will" requires a surrender or transformation of "natural right" in the name of an artificial or man-made community. Whereas "natural inclinations" are the best guide to the father, for example, "it is these very inclinations which corrupt the magistrate."[56] Whenever humans form groups or "societies" within the community as a whole, this tendency causes narrower associations to have selfish or private interests that contradict the moral obligations of the common good:

> A given man can be a pious priest, or a brave soldier, or a zealous lawyer, and a bad citizen. A given deliberation can be advantageous to the small community and pernicious to the large one. It is true that since particular societies are always subordinate to those that contain them, one ought to obey the latter in preference to the former: the citizen's duties take precedence over the senator's, and the man's over the citizen's. But unfortunately personal interest is always found in inverse ratio to duty, and it increases in proportion as the association becomes narrower and the engagement less sacred—invincible proof that the most general will is also always the most just, and that the voice of the people is in fact the voice of God.[57]

Far from equating the "general will" with natural right, as Diderot had done, Rousseau makes them opposed principles, transforming what had been a theologically inspired conception of divine providence or a rationalist definition of natural law into a secular justification for the pagan republicanism symbolized by the Roman formula, *vox populi vox dei*.

Rousseau's responses to criticisms of the *Second Discourse* are thus ex-

tremely illuminating. Unlike the polemics surrounding the *First Discourse*, the critics who attracted Jean-Jacques's attention were now of the highest order: Voltaire, Bonnet, LeRoy, and Diderot. These critics represent, moreover, the conflicting philosophic positions that were targets of Rousseau's enterprise. Voltaire's skeptical rationalism, Bonnet's theological view of providence, LeRoy's scientific expertise, and Diderot's secular philosophy all contradict the complex understanding of human nature and history developed in the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*.

In addition to their substantive interest, the timing of these texts provides strong evidence against the claim that Rousseau shifted his principles from a strongly individualist definition of natural right (*Second Discourse*) to a collectivist conception of the community (*Social Contract*). Quite the contrary, the principles of political right articulated in the Dedication to the *Second Discourse* (dated June 12, 1754), the article on *Political Economy* (published in October 1755), and the first draft of the *Social Contract* (probably written in 1756)[58] seem thoroughly consistent. The writings in the present volume therefore illuminate the origins of Rousseau's political principles and facilitate a deeper understanding of his philosophic "system."

Rousseau's Originality

To use contemporary terms, Rousseau's principles are "democratic" and "revolutionary." But whereas democrats or revolutionaries often imply that historical progress will inevitably result if corrupt regimes are swept away, Rousseau rejects such an optimistic view of history—and yet still favors a republican or egalitarian form of government. In other words, the revolutionary side of Rousseau's thought takes on added power precisely because he accepts the view of history usually adopted by traditionalists; the argument that many societies will inevitably be ruled by despots and tyrants only makes the assertion of political freedom all the more striking.

Rousseau's originality thus lies in his attempt to combine a view of human nature that is derived from moderns like Hobbes and Locke with a skepticism about the possibility of permanently solving all political problems that is derived from ancients like Plato and Aristotle. At the same time, however, Rousseau replaces the aggressive or rational egoism of Hobbes and Locke with the more passive and instinctive self-preservation of isolated animals. And while sharing the ancient's skepticism toward radical historical progress, Rousseau modifies it by presenting

scientific principles that show how to construct a legitimate and free government, at least in some instances.

Rousseau thus contradicts virtually all of the major positions in the intellectual life of his time. He challenged Voltaire's ironic detachment and LeRoy's naturalistic observations on the grounds that neither was consistent with a "well organized" world governed by rationally knowable principles. Defenders of a Christian doctrine of providence like Bonnet and secular philosophers like Diderot accepted such principles but concluded that civilized society was natural to the human species or at least could be traced to natural reason, thereby setting humans apart from other animals. Almost alone in his century, Rousseau seems to have viewed humans as an animal species whose nature defines a good and healthy mode of life, but whose evolution has made the naturally good life inaccessible (at least for most of those living in civilized societies). Like Bonnet or Diderot, therefore, Rousseau believes in an ordered natural world; like Voltaire or LeRoy, he denies that this order is the foundation of a divinely ordained providence or a rationally discoverable natural law.

If Rousseau is considered in terms of his conceptions of human nature and of history, which are fundamental to all political thought, the coherence of his "system" becomes clearer. Unlike most writers, he not only saw why prior political philosophers had been divided by these basic issues, he also transformed the terms of the debate in his attempt to resolve it. In short, Jean-Jacques Rousseau is one of the few political theorists who goes to the root of perennial questions and thereby contributes new concepts if not a new frame of reference to our understanding of human nature, moral obligation, and politics.

Note on the Text

This translation is an effort to provide an English version that corresponds word for word (as far as possible) with Rousseau's French text. Wherever possible, words have been translated consistently both within and between Rousseau's political writings. Although this goal may cause some awkwardness (especially in the overly rhetorical Dedicatory Epistle to the *Second Discourse*), it has the advantage of permitting readers to come to their own conclusions with the smallest danger that the translation will have imposed a particular interpretation.

The translation of the *Second Discourse* was originally published by St. Martin's Press (1964) and is reproduced here with permission. As a basic text, we employed the text in C. E. Vaughan's edition of *The Political Writings of Rousseau* (2 vols.; Cambridge: University Press, 1915), I, 124–220. The recently published critical edition by Heinrich Meier, accompanying his German translation, *Diskurs über die Ungleichheit* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1984; 2nd ed., 1990), contains valuable corrections and the *Observations of Charles-Georges LeRoy*. Volume III of the Pléiade edition of Rousseau's *Oeuvres complètes*, which was not published until after the first edition of the translation of the *Discourses*, was used as the basic text for the translation of the *Political Economy* (also originally published by St. Martin's Press [1978] and reproduced here with permission). Essays written by Rousseau's critics and his rejoinders are newly translated for the present edition; except for Rousseau's Letter to Voltaire of August 16, 1756, and Voltaire's reply of September 12, translated by Terence E. Marshall, these translations are by the editors. Many of these texts are not available in the Pléiade, and have been based on Volume 2 of Michel Launay's edition of Rousseau's *Oeuvres complètes* (Paris: Seuil—l'Intégrale, 1971) and, for Rousseau's correspondence with Voltaire, on R. A. Leigh's edition of the *Correspondance complète de J.-J. Rousseau* (Geneva: Musée et Institut Voltaire, 1965–).

In order to provide consistency throughout, a few minor modifications in previously published translations have been necessary. The Facsimile of Rousseau's own copy of the first edition of the *Second Discourse,* which contains his own corrections for republication, (see Editorial notes, p. 176) shows careful attention to capitalization; at the risk of ar-

chaism we have restored the original capitals throughout. For the *Political Economy* we have followed the Pléiade and also consulted Diderot's Encyclopedia in which the work first appeared. We thank particularly Peter Stillman and John T. Scott for noting errors and suggesting valuable changes.

We would also like to thank the Beinecke Rare Book Library of Yale University for permission to consult the first editions of the *Discourses* and a manuscript translation of the *Second Discourse* written by John Farrington of Clapham, England, in 1756. Farrington's version, which is superior to many other translations, suggested solutions to several difficult problems. We would also like to thank Richard P. Duval for assistance in translating Rousseau's Latin quotations in the *Discourses*.

We thank the following publishers for permission to reprint quotations from the works indicated: Thomas Nelson (Frederick Watkins, trans., *Rousseau: Political Writings*); E. P. Dutton, Everyman's Library (Richard Crawley, trans., *Thucydides' The History of the Peloponnesian War*); Clarendon Press (J. B. Moyle, trans., *Institutes of Justinian*); Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees* (Ernest Barker, trans., Aristotle's *Politics*); and Harvard University Press (A. D. Godley, trans., Herodotus's *Histories*).

DISCOURSE ON THE ORIGINS OF INEQUALITY

(SECOND DISCOURSE)

POLEMICS AND POLITICAL ECONOMY

He goes back to his equals.
*See note (*13), pp. 92–93.*

DISCOURSE ON THE ORIGIN AND FOUNDATIONS OF INEQUALITY AMONG MEN

By Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Citizen of Geneva

Non in depravatis, sed in his quae bene secundam naturam se habent, considerandum est quid sit naturale.

Aristotle, *Politics*, L. 1[1]

AMSTERDAM

Chez MARC MICHEL REY

MDCCLV

THE REPUBLIC

OF GENEVA

MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED,

AND SOVEREIGN LORDS

Being convinced that only the virtuous Citizen may properly give his Fatherland those honors which it may acknowledge, I have worked for thirty years to deserve to offer you public homage; and as this happy occasion partially supplements what my efforts have been unable to accomplish, I believed I might be permitted here to follow the zeal that prompts me, rather than the right that ought to be my authorization.[2] Having had the good fortune to be born among you, how could I meditate upon the equality nature established among men, and upon the inequality they have instituted, without thinking of the profound wisdom with which both, happily combined in this State, contribute, in the manner most approximate to natural law and most favorable to society, to the maintenance of public order, and the happiness of individuals? While seeking the best maxims that good sense could dictate concerning the constitution of a government, I was so struck to see them all in practice in yours that even had I not been born within your walls, I should have believed myself unable to dispense with offering this picture of human society to that People which, of all others, seems to me to possess society's greatest advantages and to have best prevented its abuses.

If I had to choose my birthplace, I would have chosen a society of a size limited by the extent of human faculties—that is, limited by the possibility of being well governed—and where, each being adequate to his job, no one would have been constrained to commit to others the functions with which he was charged; a State where, all the individuals knowing one another, neither the obscure maneuvers of vice nor the modesty of virtue could be hidden from the notice and judgment of the Public, and where that sweet habit of seeing and knowing one another

turned love of the Fatherland into love of the Citizens rather than love of the soil.

I would have wished to be born in a country where the Sovereign and the people could have only one and the same interest, so that all movements of the machine always tended only to the common happiness. Since that would not be possible unless the People and the Sovereign were the same person, it follows that I would have wished to be born under a democratic government, wisely tempered.

I would have wished to live and die free, that is to say so subject to the laws that neither I nor anyone else could shake off their honorable yoke: that salutary and gentle yoke, which the proudest heads bear with all the more docility because they are suited to bear no other.

I would therefore have wished that no one in the State could declare himself above the law and that no one outside could impose any law the State was obliged to recognize. For whatever the constitution of a government may be, if a single man is found who is not subject to the
(*1.) law, all the others are necessarily at his discretion (*1.);† and if there is a national Chief and another foreign Chief, whatever division of authority they may make, it is impossible for both of them to be well obeyed and for the State to be well governed.

I would not have wished to live in a newly instituted Republic, however good its laws might be, for fear that—the government, perhaps constituted otherwise than would be necessary for the moment, and being unsuited to the new Citizens or the Citizens to the new government—the State would be subject to be disturbed and destroyed almost from its birth. For freedom is like those solid and rich foods or those hearty wines, which are proper to nourish and fortify robust constitutions habituated to them, but which overpower, ruin, and intoxicate the weak and delicate who are unsuited for them. Once Peoples are accustomed to Masters, they are no longer able to do without them. If they try to shake off the yoke, they move all the farther away from freedom because, mistaking for freedom an unbridled license which is its opposite, their revolutions almost always deliver them to seducers who only make their chains heavier. The Roman People itself, that model of all free Peoples, was not capable of governing itself on emerging from the oppression of

† Rousseau's notes to the *Second Discourse* will be found on pp. 67–94. In the original edition, these notes are indicated in a curious way: although most are marked by arabic numerals, four are signalled by the letters a through d, inserted out of alphabetical order. Prior editors have usually changed the notes to a sequence of either letters (e.g., Vaughan) or roman numerals (e.g., Pléiade). For this edition, the original style of the footnotes has been restored, including Rousseau's use of a second set of parentheses in the margin of the page for all notes after (*3). (*Eds.*)

the Tarquins. Debased by slavery and the ignominious labors the Tarquins had imposed on it, it was at first only a stupid Mob that needed to be handled and governed with the greatest wisdom, so that, growing accustomed little by little to breathe the salutary air of freedom, those souls, enervated or rather brutalized under tyranny, acquired by degrees that severity of morals and that pride of courage which eventually made them the most respectable of all Peoples. I would therefore have sought for my Fatherland a happy and tranquil Republic, whose antiquity was in a way lost in the darkness of time, which had experienced only those attacks suited to display and strengthen courage and love of Fatherland in its inhabitants, and where the Citizens, long accustomed to wise independence, were not only free but worthy of being so.

I would have wished to choose for myself a Fatherland diverted by its fortunate impotence from the fierce love of Conquests, and safeguarded by an even more fortunate location from the fear of becoming itself the Conquest of another State; a free City, situated among several Peoples none of whom had an interest in invading it, while each had an interest in preventing the others from invading it themselves; in a word, a Republic that did not tempt the ambition of its neighbors, and that could reasonably count on their help if necessary. It follows that, in such a fortunate position, it would have had nothing to fear except from itself; and that, if its Citizens were trained in the use of arms, it would have been to maintain in them that warlike ardor and that pride of courage which suit freedom so well and whet the appetite for it, rather than from the necessity to provide for their own defense.

I would have sought a Country where the right of legislation was common to all Citizens; for who can know better than they under what conditions it suits them to live together in the same society? But I would not have approved of Plebiscites like those of the Romans, where the Chiefs of the State and those most interested in its preservation were excluded from the deliberations on which its safety often depended, and where, by an absurd inconsistency, the Magistrates were deprived of the rights enjoyed by the ordinary Citizens.

On the contrary, I would have desired that, in order to stop the selfish and ill-conceived projects and the dangerous innovations that finally ruined the Athenians, everyone did not have the power to propose new Laws according to his fancy; that this right belonged exclusively to the Magistrates; that even they used it with so much caution that the People, on its side, was so hesitant in giving its consent to these Laws, and that their promulgation could only be done with so much solemnity, that before the constitution was shaken one had time to be convinced that it

is above all the great antiquity of Laws which makes them holy and venerable; that the People soon scorns those laws which it sees change daily; and that in growing accustomed to neglect old usages on the pretext of making improvements, great evils are often introduced to correct lesser ones.

Above all I would have fled, as necessarily ill-governed, a Republic where the People, believing it could do without its Magistrates or only allow them a precarious authority, would imprudently have retained the administration of Civil affairs and the execution of its own Laws. Such must have been the rude constitution of the first governments emerging immediately out of the state of Nature, and such was also one of the Vices that ruined the Republic of Athens.

Rather I would have chosen that Republic where the individuals, being content to give sanction to the Laws and to decide in a Body and upon the report of their Chiefs the most important public affairs, would establish respected tribunals, distinguish with care their various departments, elect from year to year the most capable and most upright of their Fellow Citizens to administer Justice and govern the State; and where, the Virtue of the Magistrates thus being evidence of the wisdom of the People, they would mutually honor each other. So that if ever some fatal misunderstandings happened to disturb public concord, even those times of blindness and errors were marked by proofs of moderation, reciprocal esteem, and a common respect for the Laws: presages and guarantees of a sincere and perpetual reconciliation.[3]

Such are, MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED, AND SOVEREIGN LORDS, the advantages that I would have sought in the Fatherland I would have chosen for myself. And if Providence had in addition given it a charming site, a temperate Climate, a fertile countryside, and the most delightful appearance beneath the Heavens, to complete my happiness I would have desired only to enjoy all these things in the bosom of that happy Fatherland, living peacefully in sweet society with my Fellow Citizens, practicing toward them, and following their example, humanity, friendship, and all the virtues; and leaving behind me the honorable memory of a good man and a decent and virtuous Patriot.

If, less happy or too late wise, I saw myself reduced to end an infirm and languishing career in other Climes, uselessly regretting the repose and Peace of which my imprudent youth deprived me, I would at least have nourished in my soul those same sentiments I could not use in my country; and moved by a tender and disinterested affection for my distant Fellow Citizens, from the bottom of my heart I would have addressed to them approximately the following discourse:

My dear Fellow Citizens, or rather my brothers, since the bonds of blood as well as the Laws unite almost all of us, it gives me pleasure to be unable to think of you without at the same time thinking of all the good things you enjoy, and of which perhaps none of you knows the value better than I who have lost them. The more I reflect upon your Political and Civil situation, the less I can imagine that the Nature of human things could admit of a better one. In all other Governments, when the question is to assure the greatest good of the State, everything is always limited to ideas for projects, and at most to simple possibilites. As for you, your happiness is all established, it is only necessary to enjoy it; and to become perfectly happy you have no other need than to know how to be satisfied being so. Your Sovereignty, acquired or recovered at sword's point, and preserved through two centuries by dint of valor and wisdom, is at last fully and universally recognized. Honorable Treaties determine your boundaries, secure your rights, and strengthen your repose. Your constitution is excellent, dictated by the most sublime reason and guaranteed by friendly and respectable Powers; your State is tranquil; you have neither wars nor conquerors to fear; you have no other masters except the wise Laws you have made, administered by upright Magistrates of your own choice. You are neither rich enough to enervate yourself by softness and lose in vain delights the taste for true happiness and solid virtues, nor poor enough to need more foreign help than your industry procures for you. And this precious freedom, which in large Nations is maintained only by exorbitant Taxes, costs you almost nothing to preserve.

For the happiness of its Citizens and the example of Peoples, may a Republic so wisely and so happily constituted endure forever! This is the sole wish left for you to make, and the only precaution left for you to take. Henceforth it is for you alone, not to create your happiness, since your Ancestors have saved you the trouble, but to make it lasting by the wisdom of using it well. It is upon your perpetual unity, your obedience to the Laws, your respect for their Ministers that your preservation depends. If there remains among you the least germ of bitterness or distrust, hasten to destroy it as a deadly leaven which sooner or later would result in your misfortunes and the ruin of the State. I implore all of you to look deep into your Hearts and consult the secret voice of your conscience. Does anyone among you know in the universe a more upright, more enlightened, more respectable Body than that of your Magistracy? Do not all its members give you the example of moderation, of simplicity of morals, of respect for the Laws, and of the most sincere reconciliation?[4] Then give such wise Chiefs, without reserve, that salutary confi-

dence which reason owes to virtue; bear in mind that they are of your choice, that they justify it, and that the honors due to those whom you have established in dignity necessarily reflect upon yourselves. None of you is so unenlightened as to be ignorant that where the vigor of Laws and the authority of their defenders cease, there can be neither security nor freedom for anyone. Therefore what is at issue among you except to do wholeheartedly and with just confidence what you should always be obliged to do by a true self-interest, by duty, and for the sake of reason. May a guilty and fatal indifference to the maintenance of the constitution never make you neglect in need the wise advice of the most enlightened and zealous among you; but may equity, moderation, and the most respectful firmness continue to regulate all your actions and display in you, before the whole universe, the example of a proud and modest People as jealous of its glory as of its freedom. Beware above all, and this will be my last Counsel, of ever listening to sinister interpretations and venomous discourses, the secret motives of which are often more dangerous than the acts that are their object. An entire household awakes and takes warning at the first cries of a good and faithful Guardian that never barks except at the approach of Robbers; but People hate the importunity of those noisy animals that continually trouble public repose and whose continual and misplaced warnings are not heeded even at the moment when they are necessary.

And you, MAGNIFICENT AND MOST HONORED LORDS, you worthy and respectable Magistrates of a free People,[5] permit me to offer you in particular my homages and my respects. If there is a rank in the world suited to do honor to those who hold it, it is doubtless that which is given by talents and virtue, that of which you have made yourselves worthy, and to which your Fellow Citizens have raised you. Their own merit adds to yours still another luster; and I find you, chosen by men capable of governing others in order that they themselves be governed, as much above other Magistrates as a free People, and especially that one which you have the honor to lead, is, by its enlightenment and reason, above the populace of other States.

May I be allowed to cite an example of which better records ought to remain, and which will always be present in my Heart. I never recall without the sweetest emotion the memory of the virtuous Citizen to whom I owe my being, and who often spoke to me in my childhood of the respect that was due you. I see him still, living from the work of his hands, and nourishing his soul on the most sublime Truths. I see Tacitus, Plutarch, and Grotius mingled with the instruments of his trade before him. I see at his side a beloved son, receiving with too little profit the

would Voltaire who also retired to Geneva be so obsequious & flattering!

tender instructions of the best of Fathers.[6] But if the aberrations of foolish youth made me forget such wise lessons for a time,[7] I have the happiness to feel at last that no matter what inclination one may have toward vice, it is difficult for an education in which the heart is involved to remain forever lost.

Such are, MAGNIFICENT AND MOST HONORED LORDS, the citizens and even the simple inhabitants born in the State you govern; such are those educated and sensible men of whom, under the name of Workers and Common-people, those in other Nations have such base and false ideas. My Father, I joyfully admit it, was not distinguished among his Fellow Citizens: he was only what they all are; and such as he was, there is no Country where his company would not have been sought after, cultivated, and even profitably, by the most respectable men. It does not behoove me and, thank Heaven, it is not necessary to speak to you of the consideration which can be expected from you by men of that stamp: your equals by education as well as by the rights of Nature and of birth; your inferiors by their will and by the preference they owe your merit, which they have accorded it, and for which you owe them in turn a kind of gratitude. I learn with keen satisfaction of how much you temper toward them, by gentleness and condescension, the gravity suited to ministers of the Laws; how much you return to them in esteem and attentions what they owe you in obedience and respects: conduct full of justice and wisdom, suited to put farther and farther away the memory of the unhappy events which must be forgotten in order that they never be seen again;[8] conduct all the more judicious as this equitable and generous People makes a pleasure of its duty, as it naturally loves to honor you, and as the most ardent in upholding their rights are the most inclined to respect yours.

It ought not to be surprising that the Chiefs of a Civil Society love its glory and happiness; but it is too much so for the repose of men that those who consider themselves as the Magistrates, or rather as the masters, of a more holy and more sublime Fatherland indicate some love for the terrestrial Fatherland which nourishes them.[9] How sweet it is for me to be able to make such a rare exception in our favor, and to place in the rank of our best Citizens those zealous trustees of the sacred dogmas authorized by the Laws, those venerable Pastors of souls, whose lively and sweet eloquence carries the maxims of the Gospel the better into Hearts as the pastors always begin by practicing them themselves. Everyone knows with what success the great art of Preaching is cultivated in Geneva. But as people are too accustomed to seeing things spoken of in one way and done in another, few of them know to what point the spirit

of Christianity, saintliness of morals, severity to oneself and gentleness to others reign in the Body of our Ministers. Perhaps it behooves the city of Geneva alone to provide the edifying example of such a perfect union between a Society of Theologians and of Men of Letters; it is in great part upon their wisdom and recognized moderation, and upon their zeal for the prosperity of the State, that I ground hope for its eternal tranquillity; and I note, with a pleasure mixed with astonishment and respect, how much they abhor the atrocious maxims of those sacred and barbarous men of whom History provides more than one example, and who, in order to uphold the pretended rights of God—that is to say their own interests—were all the less sparing of human blood because they flattered themselves that their own would always be respected.

Could I forget that precious half of the Republic which creates the happiness of the other and whose gentleness and wisdom maintain peace and good morals? Amiable and virtuous Countrywomen,[10] the fate of your sex will always be to govern ours. It is fortunate when your chaste power, exercised solely in conjugal union, makes itself felt only for the glory of the State and the public happiness! Thus did women command at Sparta and thus do you deserve to command at Geneva. What barbarous man could resist the voice of honor and reason in the mouth of a tender wife? And who would not despise vain luxury seeing your simple and modest attire which, from the luster it derives from you, seems the most favorable to beauty? It is for you to maintain always, by your amiable and innocent dominion and by your insinuating wit, love of Laws in the State and Concord among the Citizens; to reunite, by happy marriages, divided families; and above all to correct, by the persuasive sweetness of your lessons and by the modest graces of your conversation, the extravagances our young People adopt in other countries, whence, instead of the many useful things from which they could profit, they bring back, with a childish tone and ridiculous airs adopted among debauched women, only admiration for I know not what pretended grandeurs, frivolous compensations for servitude, which will never be worth as much as august freedom. Therefore always be what you are, the chaste guardians of morals and the gentle bonds of peace; and continue to exploit on every occasion the rights of the Heart and of Nature for the benefit of duty and virtue.

I flatter myself that events will not prove me mistaken in founding upon such guarantees hope for the common happiness of the Citizens and for the glory of the Republic. I admit that with all these advantages it will not shine with that brilliance which dazzles most eyes, the childish and fatal taste for which is the most mortal enemy of happiness and

freedom. Let dissolute youth go to seek easy pleasures and long lasting repentance elsewhere; let the supposed men of taste admire in other places the grandeur of Palaces, the beauty of carriages, the superb furnishings, the pomp of spectacles, and all the refinements of softness and luxury. In Geneva one will find only men; but such a spectacle has, nonetheless, its value, and those who seek it will be worth more than the admirers of the rest.

May you all, MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED, AND SOVEREIGN LORDS, deign to receive with the same goodness the respectful testimonies of the interest I take in your common prosperity. If I were unfortunate enough to be guilty of some indiscreet excess in this lively effusion of my Heart, I beg you to pardon it as the tender affection of a true Patriot, and as the ardent and legitimate zeal of a man who conceives no greater happiness for himself than that of seeing all of you happy.

I remain, with the most profound respect,
MAGNIFICENT, MOST HONORED, AND SOVEREIGN LORDS,
Your most humble and most obedient servant and Fellow Citizen,

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Chambéry
June 12, 1754

Preface

THE MOST USEFUL and least advanced of all human knowledge seems
(*2.) to me to be that of man(*2.); and I dare say that the inscription of the Temple of Delphi alone contained a Precept more important and more difficult than all the thick Volumes of the Moralists.[11] Thus I consider the subject of this Discourse one of the most interesting questions that Philosophy might propose, and unhappily for us, one of the thorniest that Philosophers might resolve: for how can the source of inequality among men be known unless one begins by knowing men themselves? And how will man manage to see himself as Nature formed him, through all the changes that the sequence of times and things must have produced in his original constitution, and to separate what he gets from his own stock from what circumstances and his progress have added to or changed in his primitive state? Like the statue of Glaucus, which time, sea, and storms had so disfigured that it looked less like a God than a wild Beast,[12] the human soul, altered in the bosom of society by a thousand continually renewed causes, by the acquisition of a mass of knowledge and errors, by changes that occurred in the constitution of Bodies, and by the continual impact of the passions, has, so to speak, changed its appearance to the point of being nearly unrecognizable; and, instead of a being acting always by fixed and invariable Principles, instead of that Heavenly and majestic simplicity with which its Author had endowed it, one no longer finds anything except the deformed contrast of passion which believes it reasons and understanding in delirium.

What is even crueler is that, as all the progress of the human Species continually moves it farther away from its primitive state, the more new knowledge we accumulate, the more we deprive ourselves of the means of acquiring the most important knowledge of all; so that it is, in a sense, by dint of studying man that we have made ourselves incapable of knowing him.

It is easy to see that one must seek in these successive changes of the human constitution the first origin of the differences distinguishing men—who, by common avowal, are naturally as equal among themselves as were the animals of each species before various Physical causes had introduced into certain species the varieties we notice. In effect, it is not conceivable that these first changes, by whatever means they occurred, altered all at once and in the same way all the Individuals of the species; but some, being perfected or deteriorated and having acquired diverse qualities, good or bad, which were not inherent in their Nature, the others remained longer in their original state. And such was the first

source of inequality among men, which is more easily demonstrated thus in general than assigned its true causes with precision.

Let my Readers not imagine, therefore, that I dare flatter myself with having seen what appears to me so difficult to see. I began some lines of reasoning, I ventured some conjectures, less in the hope of resolving the question than with the intention of clarifying it and reducing it to its genuine state. Others will easily be able to go farther on the same road, though it will not be easy for anyone to reach the end of it; for it is no light undertaking to separate what is original from what is artificial in the present Nature of man, and to know correctly a state which no longer exists, which perhaps never existed, which probably never will exist, and about which it is nevertheless necessary to have precise Notions in order to judge our present state correctly. He who would try to determine exactly which precautions to take in order to make solid observations on this subject would need even more Philosophy than is generally thought; and a good solution of the following Problem would not seem to me unworthy of the Aristotles and Plinys of our century: *What experiments would be necessary to achieve knowledge of natural man? And what are the means for making these experiments in the midst of society?* Far from undertaking to resolve this Problem, I think I have pondered the Subject enough to dare answer in advance that the greatest Philosophers will not be too good to direct these experiments, nor the most powerful sovereigns to make them: cooperation which it is hardly reasonable to expect, especially with the perseverance or rather the succession of enlightenment and good will necessary on each side to achieve success.

These researches, so difficult to conduct and so little thought of until now, are nevertheless the only means we have left to remove a multitude of difficulties that hide from us knowledge of the real foundations of human society. It is this ignorance of the Nature of man that throws so much uncertainty and obscurity on the true definition of natural right: for the idea of right, says M. Burlamaqui, and even more that of natural right are manifestly ideas relative to the Nature of man. It is therefore from this very Nature of man, he continues, from his constitution and his state, that the principles of that science must be deduced.[13]

It is not without surprise and scandal that one notes the little agreement which prevails on this important matter among the various Authors who have discussed it. Among the most serious Writers one can hardly find two who are of the same opinion on this point. Without speaking of the Ancient Philosophers, who seem to have tried their best to contradict each other on the most fundamental principles, the Roman Jurists subject man and all the other animals indifferently to the same

natural Law, because they consider under this name the Law that Nature imposes upon itself rather than that which it prescribes; or rather because of the particular sense in which those Jurists understand the word Law, which on this occasion they seem to have taken only for the expression of the general relations established by Nature among all animate beings for their common preservation.[14] The Moderns, recognizing under the name Law only a rule prescribed to a moral being, that is to say, intelligent, free, and considered in his relations with other beings, consequently limit the competence of natural Law to the sole animal endowed with reason, namely man; but each defining this Law in his own fashion, they all establish it upon such metaphysical principles that even among us there are very few People capable of comprehending these principles, far from being able to find them by themselves.[15] So that all the definitions of these learned men, otherwise in perpetual contradiction to one another, agree only in this, that it is impossible to understand the Law of Nature and consequently to obey it without being a great reasoner and a profound Metaphysician: which means precisely that men must have used, for the establishment of society, enlightenment which only develops with great difficulty and in very few People in the midst of society itself.

Knowing Nature so little, and agreeing so poorly upon the meaning of the word Law, it would be very difficult to agree on a good definition of natural Law. Thus all those that are found in Books, besides not being uniform, have in addition the fault of being drawn from several kinds of Knowledge which men do not naturally have, and from advantages of which men can only conceive the idea after having left the State of Nature. One begins by seeking the rules on which, for the common utility, it would be appropriate that men agree among themselves; and then one gives the name natural Law to the collection of these rules, without other proof than the good which one judges would result from their universal application. This is surely a very facile way to compose definitions and to explain the Nature of things by almost arbitrary conveniences.

But so long as we do not know natural man, we would try in vain to determine the Law he has received or that which best suits his constitution. All that we can see very clearly concerning this Law is that, for it to be Law, not only must the will of him who is bound by it be able to submit to it with knowledge; but also, for it to be natural, it must speak directly by Nature's voice.

Leaving aside therefore all scientific books which teach us only to see men as they have made themselves, and meditating on the first and simplest operations of the human Soul, I believe I perceive in it two

principles anterior to reason, of which one interests us ardently in our well-being and our self-preservation, and the other inspires in us a natural repugnance to see any sensitive Being perish or suffer, principally those like ourelves. It is from the conjunction and combination that our mind is able to make of these two Principles, without the necessity of introducing that of sociability[16] that all the rules of natural right appear to me to flow: rules which reason is later forced to reestablish upon other foundations when, by its successive developments, it has succeeded in stifling Nature.

In this way one is not obliged to make man a Philosopher before making him a man; his duties toward others are not dictated to him solely by the belated lessons of Wisdom; and as long as he does not resist the inner impulse of commiseration, he will never harm another man or even another sensitive being, except in the legitimate case where, his preservation being concerned, he is obliged to give himself preference. By this means one also ends the ancient disputes about the participation of animals in natural Law; for it is clear that, being devoid of enlightenment and freedom, they cannot recognize this Law. But as they share something of our Nature through the sensitivity with which they are endowed, one will judge that they too ought to participate in natural right, and that man is subject to some sort of duties toward them. It seems, in effect, that if I am obliged to do no harm to someone like me, it is less because he is a reasonable being than because he is a sensitive being: a quality that, being common to beast and man, ought at least to give the one the right not to be uselessly mistreated by the other.

This same study of original man, of his true needs, and of the fundamental principles of his duties, is also the only good means one could use to remove those crowds of difficulties which present themselves concerning the origin of moral inequality, the true foundations of the Body politic, the reciprocal rights of its members, and a thousand similar questions as important as they are ill explained.

When human society is considered with calm and disinterested attention, it seems to show at first only the violence of powerful men and the oppression of the weak: the mind revolts against the harshness of the former; one is prompted to deplore the blindness of the latter. And as nothing is less stable among men than those external relationships which chance produces more often than wisdom, and which are called weakness or power, wealth or poverty, human establishments appear at first glance to be founded on piles of quicksand. It is only by examining them closely, it is only after setting aside the dust and sand that surround the Edifice, that one perceives the unshakeable base upon which it is built, and that

one learns to respect its foundations. Now without serious study of man, of his natural faculties and their successive developments, one will never succeed in making such distinctions and in separating, in the present constitution of things, what divine will has done from what human art has pretended to do. The Political and moral researches occasioned by the important question I examine are therefore useful in all ways; and the hypothetical history of Governments is an instructive lesson for man in all respects. By considering what we would have become abandoned to ourselves, we ought to learn to bless him whose beneficent hand, correcting our institutions and giving them an unshakeable base, has prevented the disorders which must otherwise have resulted from them, and has created our happiness from the means that seemed likely to heighten our misery.

Quem te Deus esse
Jussit, et humana qua parte locatus es in re,
Disce.[17]

Notice on the Notes

I HAVE ADDED *some notes to this work, following my lazy custom of working in fits and starts. These notes sometimes stray so far from the subject that they are not good to read with the text. I have therefore relegated them to the end of the Discourse, in which I have tried my best to follow the straightest path. Those who have the courage to begin again will be able to amuse themselves the second time in beating the bushes, and try to go through the notes. There will be little harm if others do not read them at all.*[18]

QUESTION

Proposed by the Academy of Dijon

What is the origin of inequality
among men, and is it authorized
by natural Law?

Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men[19]

IT IS OF MAN that I am to speak; and the question I examine informs me that I am going to speak to men; for such questions are not proposed by those who are afraid of honoring the truth. Therefore I shall defend with confidence the cause of humanity before the wise men who invite me to do so, and I shall not be discontent with myself if I prove myself worthy of my subject and my judges.

I conceive of two sorts of inequality in the human Species: one, which I call natural or Physical, because it is established by Nature and consists in the difference of ages, health, Bodily strengths, and qualities of Mind or Soul;[20] the other, which may be called moral or Political inequality, because it depends upon a sort of convention and is established, or at least authorized, by the consent of Men. The latter consists in the different Privileges that some men enjoy to the prejudice of others, such as to be richer, more honored, more Powerful than they, or even to make themselves obeyed by them.

One cannot ask what the source of Natural inequality is, because the answer would be found enunciated in the simple definition of the word. Still less can one inquire if there would not be some essential link between the two inequalities; for that would be asking, in other terms, whether those who command are necessarily worth more than those who obey, and whether strength of Body or Mind, wisdom or virtue, are always found in the same individuals in proportion to Power or Wealth: a question perhaps good for Slaves to discuss in the hearing of their Masters, but not suitable for reasonable and free Men who seek the truth.

Precisely what, then, is at issue in this Discourse? To indicate in the progress of things the moment when, Right taking the place of Violence, Nature was subjected to Law; to explain by what sequence of marvels the strong could resolve to serve the weak, and the People to buy a repose in ideas at the price of a real felicity.

The Philosophers who have examined the foundations of society have all felt the necessity of going back to the state of Nature, but none of them has reached it. Some have not hesitated to attribute to Man in that state the notion of the Just and Unjust, without troubling themselves to show that he had to have that notion or even that it was useful to him.

Others have spoken of the Natural Right that everyone has to preserve what belongs to him, without explaining what they meant by belong. Still others, giving the stronger authority over the weaker from the first, have forthwith made Government arise, without thinking of the time that must have elapsed before the meaning of the words "authority" and "government" could exist among Men. All of them, finally, speaking continually of need, avarice, oppression, desires, and pride, have carried over to the state of Nature ideas they had acquired in society: they spoke about savage man and they described Civil man. It did not even enter the minds of most of our philosophers to doubt that the state of Nature had existed, even though it is evident from reading the Holy Scriptures that the first Man, having received enlightenment and precepts directly from God, was not himself in that state; and that giving the Writings of Moses the credence that any Christian Philosopher owes them, it must be denied that even before the Flood Men were ever in the pure state of Nature, unless they fell back into it because of some extraordinary Event: a Paradox that is very embarrassing to defend and altogether impossible to prove.

Let us therefore begin by setting all the facts aside, for they do not affect the question. The Researches which can be undertaken concerning this Subject must not be taken for historical truths, but only for hypothetical and conditional reasonings better suited to clarify the Nature of things than to show their genuine origin, like those our Physicists make every day concerning the formation of the World. Religion commands us to believe that since God Himself took Men out of the state of Nature immediately after the creation, they are unequal because He wanted them to be so; but it does not forbid us to form conjectures, drawn solely from the nature of man and the Beings surrounding him, about what the human Race might have become if it had remained abandoned to itself. That is what I am asked, and what I propose to examine in this Discourse. As my subject concerns man in general, I shall try to use a language that suits all Nations, or rather, forgetting times and Places in order to think only of the Men to whom I speak, I shall imagine myself in the Lyceum of Athens, repeating the Lessons of my Masters, with Plato and Xenocrates for judges, and the human Race for an Audience.

O Man, whatever Country you may come from, whatever your opinions may be, listen: here is your history as I believed it to read, not in the Books of your Fellow-men, who are liars, but in Nature, which never lies. Everything that comes from Nature will be true; there will be nothing false except what I have involuntarily put in of my own. The times of which I am going to speak are very far off: how you have changed from what you were! It is, so to speak, the life of your species that I am

going to describe to you according to the qualities you received, which your education and habits have been able to corrupt but have not been able to destroy. There is, I feel, an age at which the individual man would want to stop: you will seek the age at which you would desire your Species had stopped. Discontented with your present state for reasons that foretell even greater discontents for your unhappy Posterity, perhaps you would want to be able to go backward in time. This sentiment must be the Eulogy of your first ancestors, the criticism of your contemporaries, and the dread of those who will have the unhappiness to live after you.

First Part

Important as it may be, in order to judge the natural state of Man correctly, to consider him from his origin and examine him, so to speak, in the first Embryo of the species, I shall not follow his organic structure through its successive developments. I shall not stop to investigate in the animal System what he could have been at the beginning in order to become at length what he is. I shall not examine whether, as Aristotle thinks, man's elongated nails were not at first hooked claws;[21] whether
(*3.) he was not hairy like a bear; and whether, if he walked on all fours (*3.) his gaze, directed toward the Earth and confined to a horizon of several paces, did not indicate both the character and the limits of his ideas. On this subject I could form only vague and almost imaginary conjectures. Comparative Anatomy has as yet made too little progress and the observations of Naturalists are as yet too uncertain for one to be able to establish the basis of solid reasoning upon such foundations. Thus, without having recourse to the supernatural knowledge we have on this point, and without regard to the changes that must have come about in the internal as well as external conformation of man as he applied his limbs to new uses and as he nourished himself on new foods, I shall suppose him to have been formed from all time as I see him today: walking on two feet, using his hands as we do ours, directing his gaze on all of Nature, and measuring the vast expanse of Heaven with his eyes.

Stripping this Being, so constituted, of all the supernatural gifts he could have received and of all the artificial faculties he could only have acquired by long progress—considering him, in a word, as he must have come from the hands of Nature—I see an animal less strong than some, less agile than others, but all things considered, the most advantageously organized of all. I see him satisfying his hunger under an oak, quenching his thirst at the first Stream, finding his bed at the foot of the same tree that furnished his meal; and therewith his needs are satisfied.

The Earth, abandoned to its natural fertility(*a.) and covered by immense forests never mutilated by the Axe, offers at every step Storehouses and shelters to animals of all species. Men, dispersed among the animals, observe and imitate their industry, and thereby develop in themselves the instinct of the Beasts; with the advantage that whereas each species has only its own proper instinct, man—perhaps having none that belongs to him—appropriates them all to himself, feeds himself equally well with most of the diverse foods (*4.) which the other animals share, and consequently finds his subsistence more easily than any of them can. (*a.) (*4.)

Accustomed from infancy to inclemencies of the weather and the rigor of the seasons, trained in fatigue, and forced, naked and without weapons, to defend their lives and their Prey against other wild Beasts, or to escape by outrunning them, men develop a robust and almost unalterable physique. Children, bringing into the world the excellent constitution of their Fathers and fortifying it with the same training that produced it, thus acquire all the vigor of which the human species is capable. Nature treats them precisely as the Law of Sparta treated the Children of Citizens: it renders strong and robust those who are well constituted and makes all the others perish, thereby differing from our societies, in which the State, by making Children burdensome to their Fathers, kills them indiscriminately before their birth.

The savage man's body being the only implement he knows, he employs it for various uses of which, through lack of training, our bodies are incapable; our industry deprives us of the strength and agility that necessity obliges him to acquire. If he had an axe, would his wrist break such strong branches? If he had a sling, would he throw a stone so hard? If he had a ladder, would he climb a tree so nimbly? If he had a Horse, would he run so fast? Give Civilized man time to assemble all his machines around him and there can be no doubt that he will easily overcome Savage man. But if you want to see an even more unequal fight, put them, naked and disarmed, face to face, and you will soon recognize the advantage of constantly having all of one's strength at one's disposal, of always being ready for any event, and of always carrying oneself, so to speak, entirely with one (*5.). (*5.)

Hobbes claims that man is naturally intrepid and seeks only to attack and fight.[22] An illustrious Philosopher thinks, on the contrary, and Cumberland and Pufendorf also affirm, that nothing is so timid as man in the state of Nature, and that he is always trembling and ready to flee at the slightest noise he hears, at the slightest movement he perceives.[23] That may be so with respect to objects he does not know; and I do not doubt that he is frightened by all the new Spectacles that present themselves to

him every time he can neither discern the Physical good and evil to be expected nor compare his strength with the dangers he must run: rare circumstances in the state of Nature, where all things move in such a uniform manner, and where the face of the Earth is not subject to those brusque and continual changes caused by the passions and inconstancy of united Peoples. But Savage man, living dispersed among the animals and early finding himself in a position to measure himself against them, soon makes the comparison; and sensing that he surpasses them in skill more than they surpass him in strength, he learns not to fear them any more. Pit a bear or a wolf against a Savage who is robust, agile, courageous, as they all are, armed with stones and a good stick, and you will see that the danger will be reciprocal at the very least, and that after several similar experiences wild Beasts, which do not like to attack each other, will hardly attack man willingly, having found him to be just as wild as they. With regard to animals that actually have more strength than man has skill, he is in the position of the other weaker species, which nevertheless subsist. But man has the advantage that, no less adept at running than they and finding almost certain refuge in trees, he always has the option of accepting or leaving the encounter and the choice of flight or combat. Let us add that it does not appear that any animal naturally makes war upon man except in case of self-defense or extreme hunger, or gives evidence of those violent antipathies toward him that seem to announce that one species is destined by Nature to serve as food for the other.

These are, without doubt, the reasons why Negroes and Savages trouble themselves so little about the wild beasts they may encounter in the woods. In this respect the Caribs of Venezuela, among others, live in the most profound security and without the slightest inconvenience. Although they go nearly naked, says François Corréal, they nevertheless expose themselves boldly in the woods armed only with bow and arrow, but no one has ever heard that any of them were devoured by beasts.

Other more formidable enemies, against which man does not have the same means of defense, are natural infirmities: infancy, old age, and illnesses of all kinds, sad signs of our weakness, of which the first two are common to all animals and the last belongs principally to man living in Society. I even observe on the subject of Infancy that the Mother, since she carries her child with her everywhere, can nourish it with more facility than the females of several animals, which are forced to come and go incessantly with great fatigue, in one direction to seek their food and in the other to suckle or nourish their young. It is true that if the woman

should die, the child greatly risks dying with her; but this danger is common to a hundred other species, whose young are for a long time unable to go and seek their nourishment themselves. And if Infancy is longer among us, so also is life; everything remains approximately equal in this respect (*d.), although there are, concerning the duration of the first age (*d.) and the number of young (*6.), other rules which are not within my (*6.) Subject. Among the Aged, who act and perspire little, the need for food diminishes with the faculty of providing for it; and since Savage life keeps gout and rheumatism away from them and since old age is, of all ills, the one that human assistance can least relieve, they finally die without it being perceived that they cease to be, and almost without perceiving it themselves.

With regard to illnesses, I shall not repeat the vain and false declamations against Medicine made by most People in good health; rather, I shall ask whether there is any solid observation from which one might conclude that in Countries where this art is most neglected, the average life of man is shorter than in those where it is cultivated with the greatest care. And how could that be, if we give ourselves more ills than Medicine can furnish Remedies? The extreme inequality in our way of life: excess of idleness in some, excess of labor in others; the ease of stimulating and satisfying our appetites and our sensuality; the overly refined foods of the rich, which nourish them with binding juices and overwhelm them with indigestion; the bad food of the Poor, which they do not even have most of the time, so that their want inclines them to overburden their stomachs greedily when the occasion permits; late nights, excesses of all kinds, immoderate ecstasies of all the Passions, fatigues and exhaustion of Mind; numberless sorrows and afflictions which are felt in all conditions and by which souls are perpetually tormented: these are the fatal proofs that most of our ills are our own work, and that we would have avoided almost all of them by preserving the simple, uniform, and solitary way of life prescribed to us by Nature. If she destined us to be healthy, I almost dare affirm that the state of reflection is a state contrary to Nature and that the man who meditates is a depraved animal. When one thinks of the good constitution of Savages, at least of those whom we have not ruined with our strong liquors; when one learns that they know almost no illnesses except wounds and old age, one is strongly inclined to believe that the history of human illnesses could easily be written by following that of civil Societies. This at least is the opinion of Plato, who judges, from certain Remedies used or approved by Podalirius and Machaon at the siege of Troy, that various illnesses that should

have been caused by those remedies were not yet known at that time among men;[24] and Paracelsus reports that the diet, so necessary today, was invented only by Hippocrates.

With so few sources of illness, man in the state of Nature hardly has need of remedies, still less of Doctors. In this respect the human species is not in any worse condition than all the others; and it is easy to learn from Hunters whether in their chases they find many sick animals. They find many that have received extensive but very well healed wounds, that have had bones and even limbs broken and set again with no other Surgeon than time, no other regimen than their ordinary life, and that are no less perfectly cured for not having been tormented with incisions, poisoned with Drugs, or weakened with fasting. Finally, however useful well-administered medicine may be among us, it is still certain that if a sick Savage abandoned to himself has nothing to hope for except from Nature, in return he has nothing to fear except from his illness, which often renders his situation preferable to ours.

Let us therefore take care not to confuse Savage man with the men we have before our eyes. Nature treats all the animals abandoned to its care with a partiality that seems to show how jealous it is of this right. The Horse, the Cat, the Bull, even the Ass, are mostly taller, and all have a more robust constitution, more vigor, more strength and courage in the forest than in our houses. They lose half of these advantages in becoming Domesticated, and it might be said that all our cares to treat and feed these animals well end only in their degeneration.[25] It is the same even for man. In becoming sociable and a Slave he becomes weak, fearful, servile; and his soft and effeminate way of life completes the enervation of both his strength and his courage. Let us add that between Savage and Domesticated conditions the difference from man to man must be still greater than that from beast to beast; for animal and man having been treated equally by Nature, all the commodities of which man gives himself more than the animals he tames are so many particular causes that make him degenerate more noticeably.

Nakedness, lack of habitation, and deprivation of all those useless things we believe so necessary are not, then, such a great misfortune for these first men; nor, above all, are they such a great obstacle to their preservation. If they do not have hairy skin, they have no need of it in warm Countries, and in cold Countries they soon know how to appropriate the skins of Beasts they have overcome. If they have only two feet to run with, they have two arms to provide for their defense and their needs. Perhaps their Children walk late and with difficulty, but Mothers carry them with ease: an advantage lacking in other species in which the

mother, being pursued, finds herself forced to abandon her young or to regulate her speed by theirs.* Finally, unless we suppose those singular and fortuitous combinations of circumstances of which I shall speak hereafter and which could very well never happen, it is clear in any case that the first man who made himself clothing or a Dwelling, in doing so gave himself things that were hardly necessary, since he had done without them until then and since it is hard to see why he could not endure, as a grown man, a kind of life he had endured from his infancy.

Alone, idle, and always near danger, Savage man must like to sleep, and be a light sleeper like animals which, thinking little, sleep so to speak all the time they do not think. His self-preservation being almost his only care, his best-trained faculties must be those having as principal object attack and defense, either to subjugate his prey or to save himself from being the prey of another animal. On the contrary, the organs that are perfected only by softness and sensuality must remain in a state of crudeness which excludes any kind of delicacy in him; and his senses being divided in this regard, he will have extremely crude touch and taste, and sight, hearing, and smell of the greatest subtlety. Such is the animal state in general; and according to reports of Travelers, such also is that of most Savage Peoples. Thus one must not be surprised that the Hottentots of the Cape of Good Hope sight Vessels on the high sea with their naked eyes as far away as do the Dutch with Spyglasses; nor that American Savages could smell Spaniards on the trail as the best Dogs could have done; nor that all these Barbarous Nations endure their nakedness without discomfort, sharpen their taste by means of Peppers, and drink European Liquors like water.

I have to this point considered only Physical Man; let us now try to look at him from the Metaphysical and Moral side.

In every animal I see only an ingenious machine to which nature has given senses in order to revitalize itself and guarantee itself, to a certain point, from all that tends to destroy or upset it. I perceive precisely the same things in the human machine, with the difference that Nature alone does everything in the operations of a Beast, whereas man contributes to his operations by being a free agent. The former chooses or rejects by instinct and the latter by an act of freedom, so that a Beast cannot deviate from the Rule that is prescribed to it even when it would be advanta-

*There may be a few exceptions to this: for example, that animal of the Province of Nicaragua which resembles a Fox, has feet like a man's hands, and according to Corréal has a pouch under the stomach where the mother puts her young when she is obliged to flee. This is doubtless the same animal that is called Tlaquatzin in Mexico, to the female of which Laët ascribes a similar pouch for the same use.

geous for it to do so, and a man deviates from it often to his detriment. Thus a Pigeon would die of hunger near a Basin filled with the best meats, and a Cat upon heaps of fruits or grain, although each could very well nourish itself on the food it disdains if it made up its mind to try some. Thus dissolute men abandon themselves to excesses which cause them fever and death, because the Mind depraves the senses and because the will still speaks when Nature is silent.

Every animal has ideas, since it has senses; it even combines its ideas up to a certain point, and in this regard man differs from a Beast only in degree. Some Philosophers have even suggested that there is more difference between a given man and another than between a given man and a given beast.[26] Therefore it is not so much understanding which constitutes the distinction of man among the animals as it is his being a free agent. Nature commands every animal, and the Beast obeys. Man feels the same impetus, but he realizes that he is free to acquiesce or resist; and it is above all in the consciousness of this freedom that the spirituality of his soul is shown. For Physics explains in some way the mechanism of the senses and the formation of ideas; but in the power of willing, or rather of choosing, and in the sentiment of this power are found only purely spiritual acts about which the Laws of Mechanics explain nothing.

But if the difficulties surrounding all these questions should leave some room for dispute on this difference between man and animal, there is another very specific quality that distinguishes them and about which there can be no dispute: the faculty of self-perfection, a faculty which, with the aid of circumstances, successively develops all the others, and resides among us as much in the species as in the individual. By contrast an animal is at the end of a few months what it will be all its life; and its species is at the end of a thousand years what it was the first year of that thousand. Why is man alone subject to becoming imbecile? Is it not that he thereby returns to his primitive state; and that—while the Beast, which has acquired nothing and which has, moreover, nothing to lose, always retains its instinct—man, losing again by old age or other accidents all that his *perfectibility* had made him acquire, thus falls back lower than the Beast itself? It would be sad for us to be forced to agree that this distinctive and almost unlimited faculty is the source of all man's misfortunes; that it is this faculty which, by dint of time, draws him out of that original condition in which he would pass tranquil and innocent days; that it is this faculty which, bringing to flower over the centuries his enlightenment and his errors, his vices and his virtues, in the long
(*7.) run makes him the tyrant of himself and of Nature (*7.). It would be

horrible to be obliged to praise as a beneficent being the one who first suggested to the inhabitant of the banks of the Orinoco the use of those Pieces of wood which he binds on the temples of his Children, and which assure them at least a part of their imbecility and original happiness.

Savage Man, by Nature committed to instinct alone, or rather compensated for the instinct he perhaps lacks by faculties capable of substituting for it at first, and then of raising him far above Nature, will therefore begin with purely animal functions (*8.). To perceive and feel will (*8.)
be his first state, which he will have in common with all animals. To will and not will, to desire and fear, will be the first and almost the only operations of his soul until new circumstances cause new developments in it.

Whatever the Moralists may say about it, human understanding owes much to the Passions, which by common agreement also owe much to it. It is by their activity that our reason is perfected; we seek to know only because we desire to have pleasure; and it is impossible to conceive why one who had neither desires nor fears would go to the trouble of reasoning. The Passions in turn derive their origin from our needs and their progress from our knowledge. For one can desire or fear things only through the ideas one can have of them or by the simple impulsion of Nature; and Savage man, deprived of every kind of enlightenment, feels only the Passions of this last kind. His desires do not exceed his Physical needs (*9.), the only goods he knows in the Universe are nourishment, a (*9.)
female, and repose; the only evils he fears are pain and hunger. I say pain and not death because an animal will never know what it is to die; and knowledge of death and its terrors is one of the first acquisitions that man has made in moving away from the animal condition.

It would be easy for me, were it necessary, to support this sentiment by facts and to demonstrate that in all Nations of the world progress of the Mind has been precisely proportioned to the needs that Peoples had received from Nature or to those to which circumstances had subjected them, and consequently to the passions which inclined them to provide for those needs. I would show the arts coming into existence in Egypt and spreading with the flooding of the Nile. I would follow their progress among the Greeks, where they were seen to spring up, grow, and rise to the Heavens among the Sands and Rocks of Attica though they could not take root on the fertile Banks of the Eurotas.[27] I would note that, in general, the Peoples of the North are more industrious than those of the south because they can less afford not to be, as if Nature thereby wanted to equalize things by giving to Minds the fertility it refuses the Earth.

But without having recourse to the uncertain testimonies of History, who does not see that everything seems to remove Savage man from the temptation and means of ceasing to be savage? His imagination portrays nothing to him; his heart asks nothing of him. His modest needs are so easily found at hand, and he is so far from the degree of knowledge necessary for desiring to acquire greater knowledge, that he can have neither foresight nor curiosity. The spectacle of Nature becomes indifferent to him by dint of becoming familiar. There is always the same order, there are always the same revolutions; he does not have the mind to wonder at the greatest marvels; and one must not seek in him the Philosophy that man needs in order to know how to observe once what he has seen every day. His soul, agitated by nothing, is given over to the sole sentiment of its present existence without any idea of the future, however near it may be, and his projects, as limited as his views, barely extend to the end of the day. Such is, even today, the degree of foresight of the Carib: in the morning he sells his bed of Cotton and in the evening he comes weeping to buy it back, for want of having foreseen that he would need it for the coming night.

The more one meditates on this subject, the more the distance from pure sensations to the simplest knowledge increases in our eyes; and it is impossible to conceive how a man, by his strength alone, without the aid of communication and without the stimulus of necessity, could have bridged so great a gap. How many centuries perhaps elapsed before men were capable of seeing another fire than that from Heaven? How many different risks did they have to run to learn the most common uses of that element? How many times did they let it die out before they had acquired the art of reproducing it? And how many times, perhaps, did each of these secrets die with the ones who had discovered it? What shall we say of agriculture, an art which demands so much labor and foresight, which depends on so many other arts, which very clearly is practicable only in a society that has at least been started, and which does not serve so much to bring from the Earth foods it would easily provide without agriculture as to force from it those preferences most to our taste? But let us suppose that men had multiplied so greatly that the natural productions no longer sufficed to nourish them: a supposition which, it may be added in passing, would show a great advantage for the human Species in that way of life. Let us suppose that without forges and Workshops, the implements for Farming had fallen from Heaven into the hands of the Savages; that these men had conquered the mortal hatred they all have for continuous labor; that they had learned to foresee their needs so long in advance; that they had guessed how Land must be cul-

tivated, grains sown, and Trees planted; that they had discovered the art of grinding Wheat and fermenting grapes—all things they would have had to be taught by the Gods, as it is impossible to conceive how they could have learned them by themselves. After that, what man would be insane enough to torment himself cultivating a Field that will be plundered by the first comer, whether man or beast, for whom the crop is suitable? And how could each man resolve to spend his life in hard labor, when the more he will need its reward, the more certain he will be of not reaping it? In a word, how could this situation incline men to cultivate the Earth as long as it is not divided among them: that is to say, as long as the state of Nature is not annihilated?

Should we want to suppose a Savage man as skillful in the art of thinking as our Philosophers make him; should we, following their example, make him a Philosopher himself, discovering alone the most sublime truths and making for himself, by chains of very abstract reasoning, maxims of justice, and reason drawn from love of order in general or from the known will of his Creator; in a word, should we suppose his mind to have as much intelligence and enlightenment as he must and is in fact found to have dullness and stupidity, what utility would the Species draw from all this Metaphysics, which could not be communicated and which would perish with the individual who would have invented it? What progress could the human Race make, scattered in the Woods among the Animals? And to what point could men mutually perfect and enlighten one another, who, having neither fixed Domicile nor any need of one another, would perhaps meet hardly twice in their lives, without knowing each other and without talking to each other.

Let us consider how many ideas we owe to the use of speech; how much Grammar trains and facilitates the operations of the Mind; and let us think of the inconceivable difficulties and the infinite time which the first invention of Languages must have cost. Join these reflections to the preceding ones, and we shall judge how many thousands of Centuries would have been necessary to develop successively in the human Mind the Operations of which it was capable.

May I be allowed to consider for an instant the obstacles to the origin of Languages. I could be satisfied to cite or repeat here the researches that the Abbé de Condillac has made on this matter, which all fully confirm my sentiment, and which perhaps gave me the first idea of it. But since the way this Philosopher resolves the difficulties he himself raises concerning the origin of instituted signs shows that he assumed what I question—namely, a kind of society already established among the inventors of language—I believe, in referring to his reflections, that

I ought to add to them my own, in order to present the same difficulties in the way that suits my subject. The first that comes up is to imagine how languages could have become necessary; for since Men had no communication among themselves nor any need of it, one can conceive neither the necessity of this invention nor its possibility were it not indispensable. I might well say, as many others do, that Languages were born in the domestic intercourse of Fathers, Mothers, and Children. But not only would that fail to resolve the objections, it would be committing the error of those who, reasoning about the state of Nature, carry over to it ideas taken from Society, and always see the family gathered in the same habitation and its members maintaining among themselves a union as intimate and permanent as among us, where so many common interests unite them. Instead, in the primitive state, having neither Houses, nor Huts, nor property of any kind, everyone took up his lodging by chance and often for only one night. Males and females united fortuitously, depending on encounter, occasion, and desire, without speech being a very necessary interpreter of the things they had to say to each
(*10.) other; they left each other with the same ease (*10.). The mother nursed her Children at first for her own need; then, habit having endeared them to her, she nourished them afterward for their need. As soon as they had the strength to seek their food, they did not delay in leaving the Mother herself; and as there was practically no other way to find one another again than not to lose sight of each other, they were soon at a point of not even recognizing one another. Note also that the Child having all his needs to explain and consequently more things to say to the Mother than the Mother to the Child, it is the child who must make the greatest efforts of invention, and that the language he uses must be in great part his own work, which multiplies Languages as many times as there are individuals to speak them. A wandering and vagabond life contributes further to this, since it does not give any idiom the time to gain consistency. For to say that the Mother teaches the Child the words he ought to use to ask her for one thing or another shows well how one teaches already formed Languages, but it does not teach us how they are formed.

Let us suppose this first difficulty conquered; let us skip over for a moment the immense distance there must have been between the pure state of Nature and the need for Languages; and let us seek, assuming
(*b.) them to be necessary (*b.), how they could begin to be established. New difficulty, worse still than the preceding one. For if Men needed speech in order to learn to think, they had even greater need of knowing how to think in order to discover the art of speech; and even should we understand how the sounds of the voice were taken for the conventional inter-

preters of our ideas, it would still remain to be seen what could have been the specific interpreters of this convention for ideas that, having no perceptible object, could be indicated neither by gesture nor by voice. So that one can hardly form tenable conjectures about the birth of this Art of communicating thoughts and establishing intercourse between Minds: a sublime Art which is now very far from its Origin, but which the Philosopher still sees at so prodigious a distance from its perfection that no man is bold enough to guarantee it will ever achieve it, even should the revolutions time necessarily brings be suspended in its favor, should prejudices quit the academies or be silent before them, and should they be able to attend to that thorny matter for whole Centuries without interruption.[28]

Man's first language, the most universal, most energetic, and only language he needed before it was necessary to persuade assembled men, is the cry of Nature. As this cry was elicited only by a kind of instinct in pressing emergencies, to beg for help in great dangers, or for relief in violent ills, it was not of much use in the ordinary course of life, where more moderate sentiments prevail. When the ideas of men began to spread and multiply, and when closer communication was established among them, they sought more numerous signs and a more extensive language; they multiplied the inflections of the voice, and joined to it gestures which are more expressive by their Nature, and whose meaning is less dependent on prior determination. They therefore expressed visible and mobile objects by gestures, and audible ones by imitative sounds. But because gesture indicates hardly anything except present or easily described objects and visible actions; because its usage is not universal since darkness or the interposition of a body render it useless; and since it requires attention rather than stimulates it, men finally thought to substitute articulations of the voice which, without having the same relation to certain ideas, are better suited to represent all ideas as instituted signs: a substitution which cannot be made except by a common consent, and in a way rather difficult to practice for men whose crude organs as yet had no training, and even more difficult to conceive in itself, since that unanimous agreement must have had a motive, and since speech seems to have been highly necessary in order to establish the use of speech.

One must judge that the first words men used had in their Mind a much broader meaning than do those used in already formed Languages; and being ignorant of the Division of Discourse into its constituent parts, they at first gave each word the sense of a whole sentence. When they began to distinguish subject from attribute and verb from noun,

which was no small effort of genius, substantives were at first only so many proper nouns; the present infinitive was the sole tense of verbs; and the notion of adjectives must have developed only with great difficulty, because every adjective is an abstract word and abstractions are difficult and not very natural Operations.

Every object received at first a particular name, without regard to genus and Species, which these first Institutors were incapable of distinguishing; and all individual things appeared to their minds in isolation as they are in the panorama of Nature. If one Oak was called A another was called B, for the first idea one infers from two things is that they are not the same; and often much time is needed to observe what they have in common; so that the more limited the knowledge, the more extensive the Dictionary. The obstacle of all this Nomenclature could not easily be removed, for in order to organize beings under common and generic denominations, it was necessary to know their properties and differences. Observations and definitions were necessary—that is to say, much more Natural History and Metaphysics than the men of those times could have had.

Besides, general ideas can come into the Mind only with the aid of words, and the understanding grasps them only through propositions. That is one of the reasons why animals can neither formulate such ideas nor ever acquire the perfectibility which depends on them. When a Monkey goes without hesitating from one nut to another, is it thought that he has a general idea of this kind of fruit and that he compares its archetype to these two individuals? Doubtless not; but the sight of one of these nuts recalls to his memory the sensations he received from the other, and his eyes, modified in a certain way, announce to his taste the modification it is going to receive. Every general idea is purely intellectual; if imagination is in the least involved, the idea immediately becomes particular. Try to draw for yourself the image of a tree in general, you will never succeed in doing it; despite yourself it must be seen small or large, sparse or leafy, light or dark; and if it were up to you to see in it only what is found in every tree, this image would no longer resemble a tree. Purely abstract beings are seen in the same way, or are conceived only through discourse. The definition of the Triangle alone gives you the genuine idea of it: as soon as you imagine one in your mind, it is a given Triangle and not another, and you cannot avoid making its lines perceptible or its plane colored. It is therefore necessary to state propositions, hence to speak, in order to have general ideas; for as soon as the imagination stops, the mind goes no further without the help of discourse. If, then, the first Inventors could give names only to ideas they

already had, it follows that the first substantives could never have been anything but proper nouns.

But when, by means that I cannot conceive, our new Grammarians began to extend their ideas and to generalize their words, the ignorance of the Inventors must have subjected this method to very narrow limitations; and just as at first they had overly multiplied the names of individual things for want of knowing the genera and species, they then made too few species and genera for want of having considered Beings by all their differences. To extend the divisions far enough would have required more experience and enlightenment than they could have had, and more research and labor than they wanted to put into it. Now if even today new species are daily discovered that had eluded all our observations until now, think how many species must have been hidden from men who judged things only on first sight! As for primary Classes and the most general notions, it is superfluous to add that they still must have escaped them. How, for example, would they have imagined or understood the words matter, mind, substance, mode, figure, movement, since our Philosophers, who have used them for such a long time, have much trouble understanding them themselves; and since, the ideas attached to these words being purely Metaphysical, they found no model of them in Nature?

I stop with these first steps, and beg my Judges to suspend their Reading here to consider, concerning the invention of Physical substantives alone—that is to say, concerning the easiest part of the Language to discover—how far it still has to go to express all the thoughts of men, assume a consistent form, be capable of being spoken in public, and be of influence in Society. I beg them to reflect upon how much time and knowledge were necessary to discover numbers (*II.), abstract words, (*II.)
Aorists, and all the tenses of Verbs, particles, Syntax, the linking of Propositions, reasoning, and the forming of all the Logic of Discourse. For myself, frightened by the multiplying difficulties, and convinced of the almost demonstrated impossibility that Languages could have arisen and been established by purely human means, I leave to whomever would undertake it the discussion of the following difficult Problem: Which was most necessary, previously formed Society for the institution of Languages; or previously invented Languages for the establishment of Society?

Whatever these origins may be, from the little care taken by Nature to bring Men together through mutual needs and to facilitate their use of speech, one at least sees how little it prepared their Sociability, and how little it contributed to everything men have done to establish Social

bonds. In fact, it is impossible to imagine why, in that primitive state, a man would sooner have need of another man than a monkey or a Wolf of its Fellow creature; nor, supposing this need, what motive could induce the other to provide for it, nor even, in this last case, how they could agree between them on the conditions. I know we are repeatedly told that nothing would have been so miserable as man in that state; and if it is true, as I believe I have proved, that only after many Centuries could man have had the desire and opportunity to leave that state, it would be a Fault to find with Nature and not with him who would have been so constituted by Nature. But if I understand properly this term ***miserable***, it is a word that has no meaning or only signifies a painful privation and the suffering of the Body or soul. Now I would really like someone to explain to me what type of misery there can be for a free being whose heart is at peace and whose body is healthy? I ask which, Civil or natural life, is most liable to become unbearable to those who enjoy it? We see around us practically no People who do not complain of their existence, even many who deprive themselves of it insofar as they have the capacity; and the combination of divine and human Laws hardly suffices to stop this disorder. I ask if anyone has ever heard it said that a Savage in freedom even dreamed of complaining about life and killing himself. Let it then be judged with less pride on which side genuine misery lies. Nothing, on the contrary, would have been so miserable as Savage man dazzled by enlightenment, tormented by Passions, and reasoning about a state different from his own. It was by a very wise Providence that his potential faculties were to develop only with the opportunities to exercise them, so that they were neither superfluous and burdensome to him beforehand, nor tardy and useless when needed. He had, in instinct alone, everything necessary for him to live in the state of Nature: he has, in a cultivated reason, only what is necessary for him to live in society.

It seems at first that men in that state, not having among themselves any kind of moral relationship or known duties, could be neither good nor evil, and had neither vices nor virtues: unless, taking these words in a physical sense, one calls vices in the individual the qualities that can harm his own preservation, and virtues those that can contribute to it; in which case, it would be necessary to call the most virtuous the one who least resists the simple impulses of Nature.[29] But without departing from the ordinary meaning, it is appropriate to suspend the judgment we could make of such a situation and to beware of our Prejudices, until one has examined with Scale in hand whether there are more virtues than

vices among civilized men; or whether their virtues are more advantageous than their vices are deadly; or whether the progress of their knowledge is a sufficient compensation for the harms they do one another as they learn of the good they ought to do; or whether all things considered, they would not be in a happier situation having neither harm to fear nor good to hope for from anyone, rather than subjecting themselves to a universal dependence and obliging themselves to receive everything from those who do not obligate themselves to give them anything.

Above all, let us not conclude with Hobbes that because man has no idea of goodness he is naturally evil; that he is vicious because he does not know virtue; that he always refuses his fellows services he does not believe he owes them; nor that, by virtue of the right he reasonably claims to things he needs, he foolishly imagines himself to be the sole proprietor of the whole Universe. Hobbes saw very clearly the defect of all modern definitions of Natural right; but the consequences he draws from his own definition show that he takes it in a sense which is no less false. Reasoning upon the principles he establishes, this Author ought to have said that since the state of Nature is that in which care of our self-preservation is the least prejudicial to the self-preservation of others, that state was consequently the best suited to Peace and the most appropriate for the Human Race. He says precisely the opposite, because of having improperly included in the Savage man's care of self-preservation the need to satisfy a multitude of passions which are the product of Society and which have made Laws necessary.[30] The evil man, he says, is a robust Child. It remains to be seen whether Savage Man is a robust Child. Should we grant this to him, what would he conclude from it? That if, when he is robust, this man were as dependent on others as when he is weak, there is no kind of excess to which he would not be inclined: that he would beat his Mother when she would be too slow in giving him her breast; that he would strangle one of his young brothers when he would be inconvenienced by him; that he would bite another's leg when he was hit or annoyed by it. But to be robust and to be dependent are two contradictory suppositions in the state of Nature. Man is weak when he is dependent, and he is emancipated before he is robust. Hobbes did not see that the same cause that prevents Savages from using their reason, as our Jurists claim, prevents them at the same time from abusing their faculties, as he himself claims. Thus one could say that Savages are not evil precisely because they do not know what it is to be good; for it is neither the growth of enlightenment nor the restraint of Law, but the calm of passions and the ignorance of vice which prevent them from

doing evil: *Tanto plus in illis proficit vitiorum ignoratio, quam in his cognitio virtutis.*[31] There is, besides, another Principle which Hobbes did not notice, and which—having been given to man in order to soften, under certain circumstances, the ferocity of his amour-propre or the desire for
(*12.) self-preservation before the birth of this love (*12.)[32]—tempers the ardor he has for his own well-being by an innate repugnance to see his fellow suffer. I do not believe I have any contradiction to fear in granting man the sole Natural virtue that the most excessive Detractor of human virtues was forced to recognize.[33] I speak of Pity, a disposition that is appropriate to beings as weak and subject to as many ills as we are; a virtue all the more universal and useful to man because it precedes in him the use of all reflection; and so Natural that even Beasts sometimes give perceptible signs of it. Without speaking of the tenderness of Mothers for their young and of the perils they brave to guard them, one observes daily the repugnance of Horses to trample a living Body underfoot. An animal does not pass near a dead animal of its Species without uneasiness. There are even some animals that give them a kind of sepulcher; and the sad lowing of Cattle entering a Slaughterhouse announces the impression they receive from the horrible sight that strikes them. One sees with pleasure the author of the *Fable of the Bees*, forced to recognize man as a compassionate and sensitive Being, departing from his cold and subtle style in the example he gives in order to offer us the pathetic image of an imprisoned man who sees outside a wild Beast tearing a Child from his Mother's breast, breaking his weak limbs in its murderous teeth, and ripping apart with its claws the palpitating entrails of this Child. What horrible agitation must be felt by this witness of an event in which he takes no personal interest! What anguish must he suffer at this sight, unable to bring help to the fainting Mother or to the dying Child.[34]

Such is the pure movement of Nature prior to all reflection. Such is the force of natural pity, which the most depraved morals still have difficulty destroying, since daily in our theaters one sees, moved and crying for the troubles of an unfortunate person, a man who, if he were in the Tyrant's place, would aggravate his enemy's torments even more—like bloodthirsty Sulla, so sensitive to ills he had not caused,[35] or like Alexander of Pherae, who did not dare attend the performance of any tragedy lest he be seen moaning with Andromache and Priam, whereas he listened without emotion to the cries of so many citizens murdered daily on his orders.[36]

Mollissima corda
Humano generi dare se natura fatetur,
Quæ lacrimas dedit.[37]

Mandeville sensed very well that even with all their morality men would never have been anything but monsters if Nature had not given them pity in support of reason; but he did not see that from this quality alone flow all the social virtues he wants to question in men. In fact, what are generosity, Clemency, Humanity, if not Pity applied to the weak, to the guilty, or to the human species in general? Benevolence and even friendship are, rightly understood, the products of a constant pity fixed on a particular object: for is desiring that someone not suffer anything but desiring that he be happy? Even should it be true that commiseration is only a feeling that puts us in the position of him who suffers—a feeling that is obscure and lively in Savage man, developed but weak in Civilized man—what would this idea matter to the truth of what I say, except to give it more force? In fact, commiseration will be all the more energetic as the Observing animal identifies himself more intimately with the suffering animal. Now it is evident that this identification must have been infinitely closer in the state of Nature than in the state of reasoning. Reason engenders amour-propre and reflection fortifies it; reason turns man back upon himself, it separates him from all that bothers and afflicts him. Philosophy isolates him; because of it he says in secret, at the sight of a suffering man: perish if you will, I am safe. No longer can anything except dangers to the entire society trouble the tranquil sleep of the Philosopher and tear him from his bed. His fellow can be murdered with impunity right under his window; he has only to put his hands over his ears and argue with himself a bit to prevent Nature, which revolts within him, from identifying him with the man who is being assassinated. Savage man does not have this admirable talent, and for want of wisdom and reason he is always seen heedlessly yielding to the first feeling of humanity. In Riots or Street fights the Populace assembles, the prudent man moves away; it is the rabble, the Marketwomen, who separate the combatants and prevent honest people from murdering each other.

It is very certain, therefore, that pity is a natural feeling which, moderating in each individual the activity of love of oneself, contributes to the mutual preservation of the entire species. It carries us without reflection to the aid of those whom we see suffer; in the state of Nature, it takes the place of Laws, morals, and virtue, with the advantage that no one is tempted to disobey its gentle voice; it will deter every robust Savage from robbing a weak child or an infirm old man of his hard-won subsistence if he himself hopes to be able to find his own elsewhere. Instead of that sublime maxim of reasoned justice, *Do unto others as you would have them do unto you*, it inspires all Men with this other maxim of natural goodness, much less perfect but perhaps more useful than the

preceding one: *Do what is good for you with the least possible harm to others.* In a word, it is in this Natural feeling, rather than in subtle arguments, that we must seek the cause of the repugnance every man would feel in doing evil, even independently of the maxims of education. Although it may behoove Socrates and Minds of his stamp to acquire virtue through reason, the human Race would have perished long ago if its preservation had depended only on the reasonings of its members.

With such inactive passions and such a salutary restraint, men—more untamed than evil, and more attentive to protecting themselves from harm they could receive than tempted to harm others—were not subject to very dangerous quarrels. Since they had no kind of commerce among themselves; since they consequently knew neither vanity, nor consideration, nor esteem, nor contempt; since they did not have the slightest notion of thine and mine, nor any genuine idea of justice; since they regarded the violences they might suffer as harm easy to redress and not as an insult which must be punished, and since they did not even dream of vengeance, except perhaps mechanically and on the spot, like the dog that bites the stone thrown at him, their disputes would rarely have had bloody consequences had there been no more sensitive subject than Food. But I see a more dangerous subject left for me to discuss.

Among the passions that agitate the heart of man, there is an ardent, impetuous one that makes one sex necessary to the other; a terrible passion which braves all dangers, overcomes all obstacles, and which, in its fury, seems fitted to destroy the human Race it is destined to preserve. What would become of men, tormented by this unrestrained and brutal rage, without chastity, without modesty, daily fighting over their loves at the price of their blood?

It must first be agreed that the more violent the passions, the more necessary Laws are to contain them. But besides the fact that the disorders and crimes these passions cause every day among us show well enough the inadequacy of Laws in this regard, it would still be good to examine whether these disorders did not arise with the Laws themselves; for then, even should they be capable of repressing these disorders, the very least that ought to be required of the laws is to stop an evil which would not exist without them.

Let us begin by distinguishing between the moral and the Physical in the feeling of love.[38] The Physical is that general desire which inclines one sex to unite with the other. The moral is that which determines this desire and fixes it exclusively on a single object, or which at least gives it a greater degree of energy for this preferred object. Now it is easy to see that the moral element of love is an artificial feeling born of the usage of

society, and extolled with much skill and care by women in order to establish their empire and make dominant the sex that ought to obey. This feeling, founded on certain notions of merit or beauty that a Savage is not capable of having, and on comparisons he is not capable of making, must be almost null for him. For as his mind could not form abstract ideas of regularity and proportion, so his heart is not susceptible to the feelings of admiration and love that, even without its being noticed, arise from the application of these ideas. He heeds solely the temperament he received from Nature, and not the taste he has not been able to acquire; any woman is good for him.

Limited solely to that which is Physical in love, and fortunate enough to be ignorant of those preferences that irritate its feeling and augment its difficulties, men must feel the ardors of their temperament less frequently and less vividly, and consequently have fewer and less cruel disputes among themselves. Imagination, which causes so much havoc among us, does not speak to Savage hearts. Everyone peaceably waits for the impulsion of Nature, yields to it without choice with more pleasure than frenzy; and the need satisfied, all desire is extinguished.

It is therefore incontestable that love itself, like all the other passions, has acquired only in society that impetuous ardor which so often makes it fatal for men; and it is all the more ridiculous to portray Savages continually murdering each other to satisfy their brutality as this opinion is directly contrary to experience, and as the Caribs, that of all existing Peoples which until now has departed least from the state of Nature, are precisely the most peaceful in their loves and the least subject to jealousy, even though they live in a burning hot Climate, which always seems to give greater activity to these passions.

Regarding inferences that one could draw, in some species of animals, from the fights of Males which bloody our farmyards in all seasons or which make our forests resound with their cries in Spring as they contend for a female, it is necessary to begin by excluding all species in which Nature has manifestly established, in the relative power of the Sexes, other relations than among us: thus Cockfights do not provide an inference for the human species. In species where the Proportion is better observed, these fights can have for causes only the scarcity of females with reference to the number of Males, or the exclusive intervals during which the female constantly refuses to let the male approach her, which amounts to the first cause; for if each female tolerates the male during only two months of the year, in this respect it is the same as if the number of females were reduced by five-sixths. Now neither of these two cases is applicable to the human species, in which the number of females gener-

ally surpasses the number of males, and in which it has never been observed that, even among Savages, females, like those of other species, have times of heat and exclusion. Moreover, among some of these animals, since the entire species enters a state of heat at the same time, there comes a terrible moment of general ardor, tumult, disorder, and fighting: a moment that does not take place in the human species, in which love is never periodic. Therefore one cannot conclude from the fights of certain animals for the possession of females that the same thing would happen to man in the state of Nature. And even if one could draw that conclusion, as these dissensions do not destroy the other species, one must consider at least that they would not be more fatal to ours; and it is very apparent that they would cause still less havoc in the state of Nature than they do in Society, particularly in Countries where, Morals still counting for something, the jealousy of Lovers and the vengeance of Husbands are a daily cause of Duels, Murders, and worse things; where the obligation to eternal fidelity serves only to create adulterers; and where even the Laws of continence and honor necessarily spread debauchery and multiply abortions.

Let us conclude that wandering in the forests, without industry, without speech, without domicile, without war and without liaisons, with no need of his fellows, likewise with no desire to harm them, perhaps never even recognizing anyone individually, Savage man, subject to few passions and self-sufficient, had only the feelings and intellect suited to that state; he felt only his true needs, saw only what he believed he had an interest to see; and his intelligence made no more progress than his vanity. If by chance he made some discovery, he was all the less able to communicate it because he did not recognize even his Children. Art perished with the inventor. There was neither education nor progress; the generations multiplied uselessly; and everyone always starting from the same point, Centuries passed in all the crudeness of the first ages; the species was already old, and man remained ever a child.

If I have spent so much time on the supposition of this primitive condition, it is because, having ancient errors and inveterate prejudices to destroy, I thought I ought to dig down to the root and show, in the panorama of the genuine state of Nature, how far even natural inequality is from having as much reality and influence in that state as our Writers claim.

In fact, it is easy to see that, among the differences that distinguish men, some pass for natural that are uniquely the work of habit and the various types of life men adopt in Society. Thus a robust or delicate temperament, and the strength or weakness that depend on it, often

come more from the harsh or effeminate way in which one has been raised than from the primitive constitution of bodies. The same is true of strength of Mind; and not only does education establish a difference between cultivated Minds and those which are not, but it augments the difference among the former in proportion to their culture; for should a Giant and a Dwarf walk on the same road, every step they both take will give fresh advantage to the Giant. Now if one compares the prodigious diversity of educations and types of life that prevails in the different orders of the civil state with the simplicity and uniformity of animal and savage life, in which all nourish themselves on the same foods, live in the same manner, and do exactly the same things, it will be understood how much less the difference between one man and another must be in the state of Nature than in society, and how much natural inequality must increase in the human species through instituted inequality.

But even should Nature assign as many preferences in the distribution of its gifts as is claimed, what advantage would the most favored draw from them to the prejudice of others in a state of things which permitted almost no sort of relationship among them? Where there is no love, of what use is beauty? What is the use of wit for people who do not speak, and ruse for those who have no dealings? I hear it always repeated that the stronger will oppress the weak. But let someone explain to me what is meant by this word oppression. Some will dominate by violence, the others will groan, enslaved to all their whims. That is precisely what I observe among us; but I do not see how that could be said of Savage men, to whom one would even have much trouble explaining what servitude and domination are. A man might well seize the fruits another has gathered, the game he has killed, the cave that served as his shelter; but how will he ever succeed in making himself obeyed? And what can be the chains of dependence among men who possess nothing? If someone chases me from one tree, I am at liberty to go to another; if someone torments me in one place, who will prevent me from going elsewhere? Is there a man whose strength is sufficiently superior to mine and who is, in addition, depraved enough, lazy enough, and wild enough to force me to provide for his subsistence while he remains idle? He must resolve not to lose sight of me for a single moment and to keep me very carefully tied up during his sleep, for fear that I should escape or kill him—that is to say, he is obliged to expose himself voluntarily to much greater trouble than he wants to avoid and gives to me. After all that, should his vigilance relax for a moment, should an unforseen noise make him turn his head, I take twenty steps in the forest, my chains are broken, and he never in his life sees me again.

Without uselessly prolonging these details, everyone must see that, since the bonds of servitude are formed only from the mutual dependence of men and the reciprocal needs that unite them, it is impossible to enslave a man without first putting him in the position of being unable to do without another; a situation which, as it did not exist in the state of Nature, leaves each man there free of the yoke, and renders vain the Law of the stronger.

After having proved that Inequality is barely perceptible in the state of Nature, and that its influence there is almost null, it remains for me to show its origin and progress in the successive developments of the human Mind. After having shown that *perfectibility*, social virtues, and the other faculties that Natural man had received in potentiality could never develop by themselves, that in order to develop they needed the chance combination of several foreign causes which might never have arisen and without which he would have remained eternally in his primitive constitution, it remains for me to consider and bring together the different accidents that were able to perfect human reason while deteriorating the species, make a being evil while making him sociable, and from such a distant origin finally bring man and the world to the point where we see them.

I admit that as the events I have to describe could have happened in several ways, I can make a choice only by conjectures. But besides the fact that these conjectures become reasons when they are the most probable that one can draw from the nature of things, and the sole means that one can have to discover the truth, the conclusions I want to deduce from mine will not thereby be conjectural, since, on the principles I have established, one could not conceive of any other system that would not provide me with the same results, and from which I could not draw the same conclusions.

This will excuse me from expanding my reflections concerning the way in which the lapse of time compensates for the slight probability of events; concerning the surprising power of very trivial causes when they act without interruption; concerning the impossibility, on the one hand, for one to destroy certain hypotheses, although on the other one cannot give them the degree of certainty of facts; concerning how, when two facts given as real are to be connected by a series of intermediate facts which are unknown or considered as such, it is up to history, when it exists, to present the facts that connect them; while it is up to Philosophy, when history is lacking, to determine similar facts that might connect them;[39] finally, concerning how, with reference to events, similarity reduces the facts to a much smaller number of different classes than is

imagined. It is enough for me to offer these objects to the consideration of my Judges; it is enough for me to have arranged it so that vulgar Readers would have no need to consider them.

Second Part

The first person who, having fenced off a plot of ground, took it into his head to say *this is mine* and found people simple enough to believe him, was the true founder of civil society. What crimes, wars, murders, what miseries and horrors would the human Race have been spared by someone who, uprooting the stakes or filling in the ditch, had shouted to his fellows: Beware of listening to this impostor; you are lost if you forget that the fruits belong to all and the Earth to no one! But it is very likely that by then things had already come to the point where they could no longer remain as they were. For this idea of property, depending on many prior ideas which could only have arisen successively, was not conceived all at once in the human mind. It was necessary to make much progress, to acquire much industry and enlightenment, and to transmit and augment them from age to age, before arriving at this last stage of the state of Nature. Therefore let us start further back in time and attempt to assemble from a single point of view this slow succession of events and knowledge in their most natural order.

Man's first sentiment was that of his existence, his first care that of his preservation. The products of the Earth furnished him with all the necessary help; instinct led him to make use of them. Hunger and other appetites making him experience by turns various manners of existing, there was one appetite that invited him to perpetuate his species; and this blind inclination, devoid of any sentiment of the heart, produced only a purely animal act. This need satisfied, the two sexes no longer recognized each other, and even the child no longer meant anything to his mother as soon as he could do without her.

Such was the condition of nascent man; such was the life of an animal limited at first to pure sensations and scarcely profiting from the gifts Nature offered him, far from dreaming of wresting anything from it. But difficulties soon arose; it was necessary to learn to conquer them. The height of Trees, which prevented him from reaching their fruits, the competition of animals that sought to nourish themselves with these fruits, the ferocity of those animals that wanted to take his very life, all obliged him to apply himself to bodily exercises. It was necessary to become agile, fleet in running, vigorous in combat. Natural arms, which are branches of trees and stones, were soon discovered at hand. He learned

to surmount Nature's obstacles, combat other animals when necessary, fight for his subsistence even with men, or make up for what had to be yielded to the stronger.

In proportion as the human Race spread, difficulties multiplied along with men. Differences of soil, Climate, and season could force them to admit differences in their ways of life. Barren years, long and hard winters, and scorching Summers which consume everything required of them new industry. Along the sea and Rivers they invented the fishing line and hook, and became fishermen and eaters of Fish. In forests they made bows and arrows, and became Hunters and Warriors. In cold Countries they covered themselves with the skins of beasts they had killed. Lightning, a Volcano, or some happy accident introduced them to fire, a new resource against the rigor of winter. They learned to preserve this element, then to reproduce it, and finally to prepare with it meats they previously devoured raw.

This repeated utilizaton of various beings in relation to himself, and of some beings in relation to others, must naturally have engendered in man's mind perceptions of certain relations. Those relationships that we express by the words large, small, strong, weak, fast, slow, fearful, bold, and other similar ideas, compared when necessary and almost without thinking about it, finally produced in him some sort of reflection, or rather a mechanical prudence that indicated to him the precautions most necessary for his safety.

The new enlightenment that resulted from this development increased his superiority over the other animals by making him aware of his superiority. He practiced setting traps for them; he tricked them in a thousand ways; and although several surpassed him in strength at fighting, or in speed at running, of those which might serve him or hurt him he became with time the master of the former, and the scourge of the latter. Thus the first glance he directed upon himself produced in him the first stirring of pride; thus, as yet scarcely knowing how to distinguish ranks, and considering himself in the first rank as a species, he prepared himself from afar to claim first rank as an individual.

Although his fellows were not for him what they are for us, and although he scarcely had more intercourse with them than with other animals, they were not forgotten in his observations. The conformities that time could make him perceive among them, his female, and himself led him to judge of those which he did not perceive; and seeing that they all behaved as he would have done under similar circumstances, he concluded that their way of thinking and feeling conformed entirely to his own. And this important truth, well established in his mind, made him

follow, by a premonition as sure as Dialectic and more prompt, the best rules of conduct that it was suitable to observe toward them for his advantage and safety.

Taught by experience that love of well-being is the sole motive of human actions, he found himself able to distinguish the rare occasions when common interest should make him count on the assistance of his fellows, and those even rarer occasions when competition should make him distrust them. In the first case he united with them in a herd; or at most by some kind of free association that obligated no one and lasted only as long as the passing need that had formed it. In the second case, everyone sought to obtain his own advantage, either by naked force if he believed he could, or by cleverness and cunning if he felt himself to be the weaker.

That is how men could imperceptibly acquire some crude idea of mutual engagements and of the advantages of fulfilling them, but only insofar as present and perceptible interest could require; for foresight meant nothing to them, and far from being concerned about a distant future, they did not even think of the next day. Was it a matter of catching a Deer, everyone clearly felt that for this purpose he ought faithfully to keep his post; but if a hare happened to pass within reach of one of them, there can be no doubt that he pursued it without scruple, and that having obtained his prey, he cared very little about having caused his Companions to miss theirs.

It is easy to understand that such intercourse did not require a language much more refined than that of Crows or Monkeys, which group together in approximately the same way. For a long time inarticulate cries, many gestures, and some imitative noises must have composed the universal Language; by joining to this in each Country a few articulated and conventional sounds—the institution of which, as I have already said, is not too easy to explain—there were particular languages, but crude imperfect ones, approximately like those which varous Savage Nations still have today.

I cover multitudes of centuries like a flash, forced by the time that elapses, the abundance of things I have to say, and the almost imperceptible progress of the beginnings; for the more slowly events followed upon one another, the more quickly they can be described.

These first advances finally put man in a position to make more rapid ones. The more the mind was enlightened, the more industry was perfected. Soon, ceasing to fall asleep under the first tree or to withdraw into Caves, they discovered some kinds of hatchets of hard, sharp stones, which served to cut wood, scoop out earth, and make huts from branches

they later decided to coat with clay and mud. This was the epoch of a first revolution, which produced the establishment and differentiation of families, and which introduced a sort of property—from which perhaps many quarrels and Fights already arose. However, as the stronger were probably the first to make themselves lodgings they felt capable of defending, it is to be presumed that the weak found it quicker and safer to imitate them than to try to dislodge them; and as for those who already had Huts, each man must seldom have sought to appropriate his neighbor's, less because it did not belong to him than because it was of no use to him, and because he could not seize it without exposing himself to a lively fight with the family occupying it.

The first developments of the heart were the effect of a new situation, which united husbands and Wives, Fathers and Children in a common habitation. The habit of living together gave rise to the sweetest sentiments known to men: conjugal love and Paternal love. Each family became a little Society all the better united because reciprocal affection and freedom were its only bonds; and it was then that the first difference was established in the way of life of the two Sexes, which until this time had had but one. Women became more sedentary and grew accustomed to tend the Hut and the Children, while the man went to seek their common subsistence. The two Sexes also began, by their slightly softer life, to lose something of their ferocity and vigor. But if each one separately became less suited to combat savage beasts, on the contrary it was easier to assemble in order to resist them jointly.

In this new state, with a simple and solitary life, very limited needs, and the implements they had invented to provide for them, since men enjoyed very great leisure, they used it to procure many kinds of commodities unknown to their Fathers; and that was the first yoke they imposed on themselves without thinking about it, and the first source of the evils they prepared for their Descendants. For, besides their continuing thus to soften body and mind, as these commodities had lost almost all their pleasantness through habit, and as they had at the same time degenerated into true needs, being deprived of them became much more cruel than possessing them was sweet; and people were unhappy to lose them without being happy to possess them.

At this point one catches a slightly better glimpse of how the use of speech was established or perfected imperceptibly in the bosom of each family; and one can conjecture further how particular causes could have spread language and accelerated its progress by making it more necessary. Great floods or earthquakes surrounded inhabited Cantons with water or precipices; Revolutions of the Globe detached and broke up portions

of the Continent into Islands. One conceives that among men thus brought together and forced to live together, a common Idiom must have been formed sooner than among those who wandered freely in the forests on solid Ground. Thus it is very possible that after their first attempts at Navigation, Islanders brought the use of speech to us; and it is at least very probable that Society and languages came into being on Islands and were perfected there before they were known on the Continent.

Everything begins to change its appearance. Men who until this time wandered in the Woods, having adopted a more fixed settlement, slowly come together, unite into different bands, and finally form in each country a particular Nation, unified by morals and character, not by Regulations and Laws but by the same kind of life and foods and by the common influence of Climate. A permanent proximity cannot fail to engender at length some contact between different families. Young people of different sexes live in neighboring Huts; the passing intercourse demanded by Nature soon leads to another kind no less sweet and more permanent through mutual frequentation. People grow accustomed to consider different objects and to make comparisons; imperceptibly they acquire ideas of merit and beauty which produce sentiments of preference. By dint of seeing one another, they can no longer do without seeing one another again. A tender and gentle sentiment is gradually introduced into the soul and at the least obstacle becomes an impetuous fury. Jealousy awakens with love; Discord triumphs, and the gentlest of the passions receives sacrifices of human blood.

In proportion as ideas and sentiments follow upon one another and as mind and heart are trained, the human Race continues to be tamed, contacts spread, and bonds are tightened. People grew accustomed to assembling in front of the Huts or around a large Tree; song and dance, true children of love and leisure, became the amusement or rather the occupation of idle and assembled men and women. Each one began to look at the others and to want to be looked at himself, and public esteem had a value. The one who sang or danced the best, the handsomest, the strongest, the most adroit, or the most eloquent became the most highly considered; and that was the first step toward inequality and, at the same time, toward vice. From these first preferences were born on one hand vanity and contempt, on the other shame and envy; and the fermentation caused by these new leavens eventually produced compounds fatal to happiness and innocence.

As soon as men had begun to appreciate one another, and the idea of consideration was formed in their minds, each one claimed a right to it,

and it was no longer possible to be disrespectful toward anyone with impunity. From this came the first duties of civility, even among Savages; and from this any voluntary wrong became an outrage, because along with the harm that resulted from the injury, the offended man saw in it contempt for his person which was often more unbearable than the harm itself. Thus, everyone punishing the contempt shown him by another in a manner proportionate to the importance he accorded himself, vengeances became terrible, and men bloodthirsty and cruel. This is precisely the point reached by most of the Savage Peoples known to us, and it is for want of having sufficiently distinguished between ideas and noticed how far these Peoples already were from the first state of Nature that many have hastened to conclude that man is naturally cruel, and that he needs Civilization in order to make him gentler. On the contrary, nothing is so gentle as man in his primitive state when, placed by Nature at equal distances from the stupidity of brutes and the fatal enlightenment of Civil man, and limited equally by instinct and reason to protecting himself from the harm that threatens him, he is restrained by Natural pity from harming anyone himself, and nothing leads him to do so even after he has received harm. For, according to the axiom of the wise Locke, *where there is no property, there is no injury.*[40]

But it must be noted that the beginnings of Society and the relations already established among men required in them qualities different from those they derived from their primitive constitution; that, morality beginning to be introduced into human Actions, and each man, prior to Laws, being sole judge and avenger of the offenses he had received, the goodness suitable for the pure state of Nature was no longer that which suited nascent Society; that it was necessary for punishments to become more severe as the occasions for offense became more frequent; and that it was up to the terror of revenge to take the place of the restraint of Laws. Thus although men had come to have less endurance and although natural pity had already undergone some alteration, this period of the development of human faculties, maintaining a golden mean between the indolence of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our amour-propre, must have been the happiest and most durable epoch. The more one thinks about it, the more one finds that this state was the least subject
(*13.) to revolutions, the best for man (*13.), and that he must have come out of it only by some fatal accident, which for the common utility ought never to have happened. The example of Savages, who have almost all been found at this point, seems to confirm that the human Race was made to remain in it always; that this state is the veritable youth of the World;

and that all subsequent progress has been in appearance so many steps toward the perfection of the individual, and in fact toward the decrepitude of the species.

As long as men were content with their rustic huts, as long as they were limited to sewing their clothing of skins with thorns or fish bones, adorning themselves with feathers and shells, painting their bodies with various colors, perfecting or embellishing their bows and arrows, carving with sharp stones a few fishing Canoes or a few crude Musical instruments; in a word, as long as they applied themselves only to tasks that a single person could do and to arts that did not require the cooperation of several hands, they lived free, healthy, good, and happy insofar as they could be according to their Nature, and they continued to enjoy among themselves the sweetness of independent intercourse. But from the moment one man needed the help of another, as soon as they observed that it was useful for a single person to have provisions for two, equality disappeared, property was introduced, labor became necessary; and vast forests were changed into smiling Fields which had to be watered with the sweat of men, and in which slavery and misery were soon seen to germinate and grow with the crops.

Metallurgy and agriculture were the two arts whose invention produced this great revolution. For the Poet it is gold and silver, but for the Philosopher it is iron and wheat which have Civilized men and ruined the human Race.[41] Accordingly, both of these were unknown to the Savages of America, who therefore have always remained Savage; other Peoples even seem to have remained Barbarous as long as they practiced one of these arts without the other. And perhaps one of the best reasons why Europe has been, if not earlier, at least more constantly and better Civilized than the other parts of the world is that it is at the same time the most abundant in iron and the most fertile in wheat.

It is very difficult to conjecture how men came to know and use iron; for it is not credible that by themselves they imagined drawing the raw material from the mine and giving it the necessary preparations to fuse it before they knew what would result. From another point of view, it is even harder to attribute this discovery to some accidental fire, because mines are formed only in arid spots, stripped of both trees and plants; so that one would say that Nature had taken precautions to hide this deadly secret from us. There only remains, therefore, the extraordinary circumstance of some Volcano which, by throwing up metallic materials in fusion, would have given Observers the idea of imitating this operation of Nature. Even so, it is necessary to suppose in them much courage and

foresight to undertake such difficult labor and to envisage so far in advance the advantages they could gain from it: all of which hardly suits minds that are not already more trained than theirs must have been.

With regard to agriculture, its principle was known long before its practice was established, and it is hardly possible that men, constantly occupied with obtaining their subsistence from trees and plants, did not rather promptly have an idea of the ways used by Nature to grow Plants. But their industry probably turned in that direction only very late, either because trees, which along with hunting and fishing provided their food, did not have need of their care; or for want of knowing how to use wheat; or for want of implements to cultivate it; or for want of foresight concerning future need; or, finally, for want of means to prevent others from appropriating the fruit of their labor. Once they became industrious, it is credible that, with sharp stones and pointed sticks, they began by cultivating a few vegetables or roots around their Huts long before they knew how to prepare wheat and had the implements necessary for large-scale cultivation. Besides, to devote oneself to that occupation and seed the land, one must be resolved to lose something at first in order to gain a great deal later: a precaution very far from the turn of mind of Savage man, who, as I have said, has great difficulty thinking in the morning of his needs for the evening.

The invention of the other arts was therefore necessary to force the human Race to apply itself to that of agriculture. As soon as some men were needed to smelt and forge iron, other men were needed to feed them. The more the number of workers was multiplied, the fewer hands were engaged in furnishing the common subsistence, without there being fewer mouths to consume it; and since some needed foodstuffs in exchange for their iron, the others finally found the secret of using iron in order to multiply foodstuffs. From this arose husbandry and agriculture on the one hand, and on the other the art of working metals and multiplying their uses.

From the cultivation of land, its division necessarily followed; and from property once recognized, the first rules of justice. For in order to give everyone what is his, it is necessary that everyone can have something; moreover, as men began to look to the future and as they all saw themselves with some goods to lose, there was not one of them who did not have to fear reprisals against himself for wrongs he might do to another. This origin is all the more natural as it is impossible to conceive of the idea of property arising from anything except manual labor; because one cannot see what man can add, other than his own labor, in order to appropriate things he has not made. It is labor alone which, giving the

Cultivator a right to the product of the land he has tilled, gives him a right to the soil as a consequence, at least until the harvest, and thus from year to year; which, creating continuous possession, is easily transformed into property. When the Ancients, says Grotius, gave Ceres the epithet of legislatrix, and gave the name of Thesmaphories to a festival celebrated in her honor, they thereby made it clear that the division of lands produced a new kind of right: that is, the right of property, different from the one which results from natural Law.[42]

Things in this state could have remained equal if talents had been equal, and if, for example, the use of iron and the consumption of foodstuffs had always been exactly balanced. But this proportion, which nothing maintained, was soon broken; the stronger did more work; the cleverer turned his to better advantage; the more ingenious found ways to shorten his labor; the Farmer had greater need of iron or the blacksmith greater need of wheat; and working equally, the one, earned a great deal while the other barely had enough to live. Thus does natural inequality imperceptibly manifest itself along with contrived inequality; and thus do the differences among men, developed by those of circumstances, become more perceptible, more permanent in their effects, and begin to have a proportionate influence over the fate of individuals.

Things having reached this point, it is easy to imagine the rest. I shall not stop to describe the successive invention of the other arts, the progress of languages, the testing and use of talents, the inequality of fortunes, the use or abuse of Wealth, nor all the details that follow these, and that everyone can easily fill in. I shall simply limit myself to casting a glance at the human Race placed in this new order of things.

Behold all our faculties developed, memory and imagination in play, amour-propre aroused, reason rendered active, and the mind having almost reached the limit of the perfection of which it is susceptible. Behold all the natural qualities put into action, the rank and fate of each man established, not only upon the quantity of goods and the power to serve or harm, but also upon the mind, beauty, strength, or skill, upon merit or talents. And these qualities being the only ones which could attract consideration, it was soon necessary to have them or affect them; for one's own advantage, it was necessary to appear to be other than what one in fact was. To be and to seem to be became two altogether different things; and from this distinction came conspicuous ostentation, deceptive cunning, and all the vices that follow from them. From another point of view, having formerly been free and independent, behold man, due to a multitude of new needs, subjected so to speak to all of Nature and especially to his fellows, whose slave he becomes in a sense even in be-

coming their master; rich, he needs their services; poor, he needs their help; and mediocrity cannot enable him to do without them.[43] He must therefore incessantly seek to interest them in his fate, and to make them find their own profit, in fact or in appearance, in working for his. This makes him deceitful and sly with some, imperious and harsh with others, and makes it necessary for him to abuse all those whom he needs when he cannot make them fear him and does not find his interest in serving them usefully. Finally, consuming ambition, the fervor to raise one's relative fortune less out of genuine need than in order to place oneself above others, inspires in all men a base inclination to harm each other, a secret jealousy all the more dangerous because, in order to strike its blow in greater safety, it often assumes the mask of benevolence: in a word, competition and rivalry on one hand, opposition of interest on the other; and always the hidden desire to profit at the expense of others. All these evils are the first effect of property and the inseparable consequence of nascent inequality.

Before representative signs of wealth had been invented, it could hardly consist of anything except land and livestock, the only real goods men can possess. Now when inheritances had increased in number and extent to the point of covering the entire earth and of all bordering on each other, some of them could no longer be enlarged except at the expense of others; and the supernumeraries, whom weakness or indolence had prevented from acquiring an inheritance in their turn, having become poor without having lost anything—because while everything around them changed they alone had not changed at all—were obliged to receive or steal their subsistence from the hand of the rich; and from that began to arise, according to the diverse characters of the rich and the poor, domination and servitude or violence and rapine. The rich, for their part, had scarcely known the pleasure of domination when they soon disdained all others, and using their old Slaves to subdue new ones, they thought only of subjugating and enslaving their neighbors: like those famished wolves which, having once tasted human flesh, refuse all other food and thenceforth want only to devour men.

Thus, as the most powerful or most miserable made of their force or their needs a sort of right to the goods of others, equivalent according to them to the right of property, the destruction of equality was followed by the most frightful disorder; thus the usurpations of the rich, the brigandage of the Poor, the unbridled passions of all, stifling natural pity and the as yet weak voice of justice, made man avaricious, ambitious, and evil. Between the right of the stronger and the right of the first occupant there
(*c.) arose a perpetual conflict which ended only in fights and murder (*c.).

Nascent Society gave way to the most horrible state of war: the human Race, debased and desolated, no longer able to turn back or renounce the unhappy acquisitions it had made, and working only toward its shame by abusing the faculties that honor it, brought itself to the brink of its ruin.

Attonitus novitate mali, divesque, miserque,
Effugere optat opes, et quæ modo voverat, odit.[44]

It is not possible that men should not at last have reflected upon such a miserable situation and upon the calamities overwhelming them. The rich above all must have soon felt how disadvantageous to them was a perpetual war in which they alone paid all the costs, and in which the risk of life was common to all while the risk of goods was theirs alone. Moreover, whatever pretext they might give for their usurpations, they were well aware that these were established only on a precarious and abusive right, and that having been acquired only by force, force could take them away without their having grounds for complaint. Even those enriched by industry alone could hardly base their property upon better titles. In vain might they say: But I built this wall; I earned this field by my labor. Who gave you its dimensions, they might be answered, and by virtue of what do you presume to be paid at our expense for work we did not impose on you? Do you not know that a multitude of your brethren die or suffer from need of what you have in excess, and that you needed express and unanimous consent of the human Race to appropriate for yourself anything from common subsistence that exceeded your own? Destitute of valid reasons to justify himself and of sufficient forces to defend himself; easily crushing an individual, but himself crushed by groups of bandits; alone against all, and unable because of mutual jealousies to unite with his equals against enemies united by the common hope of plunder, the rich, pressed by necessity, finally conceived the most deliberate project that ever entered the human mind. It was to use in his favor the very forces of those who attacked him, to make his defenders out of his adversaries, inspire them with other maxims, and give them other institutions which were as favorable to him as natural Right was adverse.

To this end, after having shown his neighbors the horror of a situation that made them all take up arms against one another, that made their possessions as burdensome as their needs, and in which no one found security in either poverty or wealth, he easily invented specious reasons to lead them to his goal. "Let us unite," he says to them, "to protect the weak from oppression, restrain the ambitious, and secure for everyone the possession of what belongs to him. Let us institute regulations of

Justice and peace to which all are obliged to conform, which make an exception of no one, and which compensate in some way for the caprices of fortune by equally subjecting the powerful and the weak to mutual duties. In a word, instead of turning our forces against ourselves, let us gather them into one supreme power which governs us according to wise Laws, protects and defends all the members of the association, repulses common enemies, and maintains us in an eternal concord."

Far less than the equivalent of this Discourse was necessary to win over crude, easily seduced men, who in addition had too many disputes to straighten out among themselves to be able to do without arbiters, and too much avarice and ambition to be able to do without Masters for long. All ran to meet their chains believing they ensured their freedom, for although they had enough reason to feel the advantages of a Political establishment, they did not have enough experience to forsee its dangers. Those most capable of anticipating the abuses were precisely those who counted on profiting from them; and even the wise saw the necessity of resolving to sacrifice one part of their freedom for the preservation of the other, just as a wounded man has his arm cut off to save the rest of his Body.

Such was, or must have been, the origin of Society and Laws, which
(*14.) gave new fetters to the weak and new forces to the rich, (*14.) destroyed natural freedom for all time, established forever the Law of property and inequality, changed a clever usurpation into an irrevocable right, and for the profit of a few ambitious men henceforth subjected the whole human Race to work, servitude, and misery. It is easily seen how the establishment of a single Society made that of all the others indispensable, and how, to stand up to the united forces, it was necessary to unite in turn. Societies, multiplying or spreading rapidly, soon covered the entire surface of the earth; and it was no longer possible to find a single corner in the universe where one could free oneself from the yoke and withdraw one's head from the sword, often ill-guided, that every man saw perpetually hanging over his head. Civil right having thus become the common rule of Citizens, the Law of Nature no longer operated except between the various Societies, where, under the name Right of nations, it was tempered by some tacit conventions in order to make intercourse possible and to take the place of natural commiseration which, losing between one Society and another nearly all the force it had between one man and another, no longer dwells in any but a few great Cosmopolitan Souls, who surmount the imaginary barriers that separate Peoples and who, following the example of the sovereign Being who created them, include the whole human Race in their benevolence.[45]

The Bodies Politic, thus remaining in the state of Nature with relation to each other, soon experienced the inconveniences that had forced individuals to leave it; and among these great Bodies that state became even more fatal than it had previously been among the individuals of whom they were composed. Hence arose the National Wars, Battles, murders, and reprisals which make Nature tremble and shock reason, and all those horrible prejudices which rank the honor of shedding human blood among the virtues. The most decent men learned to consider it one of their duties to murder their fellows; at length men were seen to massacre each other by the thousands without knowing why; more murders were committed on a single day of fighting and more horrors in the capture of a single city than were committed in the state of Nature during whole centuries over the entire face of the earth. Such are the first effects one glimpses of the division of the human Race into different Societies. Let us return to their institution.

I know that many have attributed other origins to Political Societies, such as conquests by the more powerful, or union of the weak; and the choice among these causes is indifferent to what I want to establish. However, the one I have just presented appears to me the most natural for the following reasons. 1. In the first case, the Right of conquest, as it is not a Right, could not have founded any other, since the Conqueror and the conquered Peoples always remain toward each other in a state of War, unless the Nation, given back its complete freedom, should voluntarily choose its Conqueror as its Chief. Until then, whatever capitulations may have been made, as they have been founded only upon violence and are consequently null by that very fact, following this hypothesis there can be neither genuine Society nor Body Politic, nor any other Law than that of the stronger. 2. These words *strong* and *weak* are equivocal in the second case; for, in the interval between the establishment of the Right of property or of the first occupant and that of political Governments, the meaning of these terms is better expressed by the terms *poor* and *rich,* since before the Laws a man did not, in fact, have any other means of subjecting his equals than by attacking their goods or by giving them some of his. 3. The Poor having nothing to lose except their freedom, it would have been great folly for them to give away voluntarily the sole good remaining to them, gaining nothing in the exchange; on the contrary, the rich being so to speak sensitive in every part of their Goods, it was much easier to harm them; they consequently had more precautions to take in order to protect themselves from harm; and finally it is reasonable to believe that a thing was invented by those to whom it is useful rather than by those whom it wrongs.

Nascent Government did not have a constant and regular form. The lack of Philosophy and experience allowed only present inconveniences to be perceived, and men thought of remedying others only as they presented themselves. Despite all the labors of the wisest Legislators, the Political state remained ever imperfect because it was almost the work of chance, and because, as it began badly, time in discovering faults and suggesting remedies could never repair the vices of the Constitution. People incessantly mended, whereas it would have been necessary to begin by clearing the area and setting aside all the old materials, as Lycurgus did in Sparta, in order to raise a good Edifice afterward. At first Society consisted only of some general conventions which all individuals pledged to observe, and regarding which the Community became the guarantor for each individual. Experience had to show how weak such a constitution was, and how easy it was for Lawbreakers to avoid conviction or punishment for faults of which the Public alone was to be witness and judge; the Law had to be evaded in a thousand ways; inconveniences and disorders had to multiply continually in order that men finally thought of confiding to private persons the dangerous trust of public authority, and committed to Magistrates the care of enforcing obedience to the deliberations of the People. For to say that the Chiefs were chosen before the confederation was created and that the Ministers of Laws existed before the Laws themselves is a supposition that does not permit of serious debate.[46]

It would be no more reasonable to believe that at first Peoples threw themselves into the arms of an absolute Master without conditions and for all time, and that the first means of providing for the common security imagined by proud and unconquered men was to rush into slavery. In fact, why did they give themselves superiors if not to defend themselves against oppression, and to protect their goods, their freedoms, and their lives, which are, so to speak, the constituent elements of their being? Now in relations between one man and another, as the worst that can happen to one is to see himself at the discretion of the other, would it not have been contrary to good sense to begin by surrendering into the hands of a Chief the only things they needed his help to preserve? What equivalent could he have offered them for the concession of so fine a Right? And had he dared to require it under pretext of defending them, would he not promptly have received the answer of the Allegory: What more will the enemy do to us? It is therefore incontestable, and it is the fundamental maxim of all Political Right, that Peoples have given themselves Chiefs to defend their freedom and not to enslave themselves. *If*

we have a Prince, said Pliny to Trajan, *it is so that he may preserve us from having a Master.*[47]

Our politicians make the same sophisms about love of freedom that our Philosophers have made about the state of Nature; by the things they see they make judgments about very different things which they have not seen. And they attribute to men a natural inclination to servitude due to the patience with which those who are before their eyes bear their servitude, without thinking that it is the same for freedom as for innocence and virtue—their value is felt only as long as one enjoys them oneself, and the taste for them is lost as soon as one has lost them. I know the delights of your Country, said Brasidas to a Satrap who compared the life of Sparta to that of Persepolis; but you cannot know the pleasures of mine.[48]

As an untamed Steed bristles his mane, paws the earth with his hoof, and breaks away impetuously at the very approach of the bit, whereas a trained horse patiently endures whip and spur, barbarous man does not bend his head for the yoke that Civilized man wears without a murmur, and he prefers the most turbulent freedom to tranquil subjection. Therefore it is not by the degradation of enslaved Peoples that man's natural dispositions for or against servitude must be judged, but by the marvels done by all free Peoples to guard themselves from oppression. I know that the former do nothing but boast incessantly of the peace and repose they enjoy in their chains, and that *miserrimam servitutem pacem appellant.*[49] But when I see the others sacrifice pleasures, repose, wealth, power, and life itself for the preservation of this sole good which is so disdained by those who have lost it; when I see Animals born free and despising captivity break their heads against the bars of their prison; when I see multitudes of entirely naked Savages scorn European voluptuousness and endure hunger, fire, the sword, and death to preserve only their independence, I feel that it does not behoove Slaves to reason about freedom.

Regarding Paternal authority, from which many have derived absolute Government and all Society, without having recourse to the contrary proofs of Locke and Sidney,[50] it suffices to note that nothing in the world is farther from the ferocious spirit of Despotism than the gentleness of that authority which looks more to the advantage of the one who obeys than to the utility of the one who commands; that by the Law of Nature, the Father is master of the Child only as long as his help is necessary for him; that beyond this stage they become equals, and the son, perfectly independent of the Father, then owes him only respect and not obedi-

ence; for gratitude is certainly a duty which must be rendered, but not a right which one can require. Instead of saying that civil Society is derived from Paternal power, it should be said on the contrary that it is from civil Society that this power draws its principle force. An individual was not recognized as the Father of many until they remained assembled around him. The goods of the Father, of which he is truly the Master, are the bonds which keep his children dependent on him, and he can give them a share of his inheritance only in proportion as they shall have properly deserved it from him by continual deference to his wishes. Now subjects, far from having some similar favor to expect from their Despot, since they and all they possess belong to him as personal belongings—or at least he claims this to be the case—are reduced to receiving as a favor what he leaves them of their own goods. He renders justice when he plunders them; he renders grace when he lets them live.

Continuing thus to test the facts by Right, one would find no more solidity than truth in the voluntary establishment of Tyranny; and it would be difficult to show the validity of a contract that would obligate only one of the parties, where all would be given to one side and nothing to the other, and that would only damage the one who binds himself. This odious System is very far from being, even today, that of Wise and good Monarchs, and especially of the Kings of France, as may be seen in various parts of their Edicts and particularly in the following passage of a famous Writing, published in 1667 in the name and by orders of Louis XIV: *Let it not be said therefore that the Sovereign is not subject to the Laws of his State, since the contrary proposition is a truth of the Right of Nations, which flattery has sometimes attacked, but which good Princes have always defended as a tutelary divinity of their States. How much more legitimate is it to say, with Wise Plato, that the perfect felicity of a Kingdom is that a Prince be obeyed by his Subjects, that the Prince obey the Law, and that the Law be right and always directed to the public good.*[51] I shall not stop to inquire whether, freedom being the most noble of man's faculties, it is not degrading one's Nature, putting oneself on the level of Beasts enslaved by instinct, even offending the Author of one's being, to renounce without reservation the most precious of all his gifts and subject ourselves to committing all the crimes he forbids us in order to please a ferocious or insane Master; nor whether this sublime workman must be more irritated to see his finest work destroyed than to see it dishonored. I shall neglect, if one wishes, the authority of Barbeyrac, who clearly declares, following Locke, that no one can sell his freedom to the point of subjecting himself to an arbitrary power which treats him according to its fancy: *Because*, he adds, *that would be selling one's own life, of which one is*

not the master.[52] I shall only ask by what Right those who have not been afraid of so greatly debasing themselves have been able to subject their posterity to the same ignominy, and to renounce for it goods which do not depend on their liberality and without which life itself is burdensome to all who are worthy of it.

Pufendorf says that just as one transfers his goods to another by conventions and Contracts, one can also divest himself of his freedom in favor of someone else.[53] That, it seems to me, is very bad reasoning: for, first, the goods I alienate become something altogether foreign to me, the abuse of which is indifferent to me; but it matters to me that my freedom is not abused, and I cannot, without making myself guilty of the evil I shall be forced to do, risk becoming the instrument of crime. Moreover, as the Right of property is only conventional and of human institution, every man can dispose at will of what he possesses. But it is not the same for the essential Gifts of Nature, such as life and freedom, which everyone is permitted to enjoy and of which it is at least doubtful that one has the Right to divest himself: by giving up the one, one degrades his being, by giving up the other one destroys it insofar as he can; and as no temporal goods can compensate for the one or the other, it would offend both Nature and reason to renounce them whatever the price. But if one could alienate his freedom like his goods, there would be a very great difference for Children, who enjoy the Father's goods only by transmission of his right; whereas since freedom is a gift they receive from Nature by being men, their Parents did not have any Right to divest them of it. So that just as to establish Slavery violence had to be done to Nature, Nature had to be changed to perpetuate this Right; and the Jurists, who have gravely pronounced that the child of a Slave would be born a Slave, have decided in other terms that a man would not be born a man.

It therefore appears certain to me not only that Governments did not begin by Arbitrary Power, which is only their corruption and extreme limit, and which finally brings them back to the sole Law of the strongest for which they were originally the remedy; but also that even if they had begun thus, this Power, being by its Nature illegitimate, could not have served as a foundation for the Rights of Society, nor consequently for instituted inequality.

Without entering at present into the researches yet to be undertaken concerning the Nature of the fundamental Compact of all Government, I limit myself, in following common opinion, to consider here the establishment of the Body Politic as a true Contract between the People and the Chiefs it chooses for itself: a Contract by which the two Parties ob-

ligate themselves to observe Laws that are stipulated in it and that form the bonds of their union.[54] The People having, on the subject of Social relations, united all their wills into a single one, all the articles on which this will is explicit become so many fundamental Laws obligating all members of the State without exception, and one of these Laws regulates the choice and power of Magistrates charged with watching over the execution of the others. This power extends to everything that can maintain the Constitution, without going so far as to change it. To it are joined honors which make the Laws and their Ministers respectable and, for the latter personally, prerogatives which compensate them for the difficult labors that good administration requires. The Magistrate, for his part, obligates himself to use the power confided in him only according to the intention of the Constituents, to maintain each one in the peaceable enjoyment of what belongs to him, and to prefer on all occasions the public utility to his own interest.

Before experience had shown or knowledge of the human Heart had made men foresee the inevitable abuses of such a constitution, it must have appeared all the better because those who were charged with watching over its preservation were themselves the most interested in it. For the Magistracy and its Rights being established only upon the fundamental Laws, should they be destroyed the Magistrates would immediately cease to be legitimate, the People would no longer be bound to obey them; and as it would not have been the Magistrate but the Law which had constituted the essence of the State, everyone would return by Right to his Natural freedom.[55]

With the slightest attentive reflection, this would be confirmed by additional reasons, and by the Nature of the Contract one would see that it could not be irrevocable: for if there were no superior power which could guarantee the fidelity of the Contracting parties nor force them to fulfill their reciprocal engagements, the Parties would remain sole judges of their own case, and each of them would always have the Right to renounce the Contract as soon as he should find that the other breaks its conditions or as soon as the conditions should cease to suit him. It is on this principle that it seems the Right to abdicate can be founded. Now to consider, as we are doing, only what is of human institution, if the Magistrate who has all the power in his hands and who appropriates for himself all the advantages of the Contract, nonetheless had the right to renounce his authority, there is all the more reason that the People, who pay for all the faults of the Chiefs, ought to have the Right to renounce their Dependence. But the frightful dissensions, the infinite disorders that this dangerous power would necessarily entail demonstrate more

than anything else how much human Governments needed a basis more solid than reason alone, and how necessary it was for public repose that divine will intervened to give Sovereign authority a sacred and inviolable character which took from the subjects the fatal Right of disposing of it. If Religion had accomplished only this good for men, it would be enough to oblige them all to cherish and adopt it, even with its abuses, since it spares even more blood than fanaticism causes to be shed.[56] But let us follow the thread of our hypothesis.

The various forms of Governments derive their origin from the greater or lesser differences to be found among individuals at the moment of Institution. Was one man eminent in power, virtue, wealth, or credit, he alone was elected Magistrate, and the State became Monarchical. If several approximately equal among themselves prevailed over all others, they were elected jointly and there was an Aristocracy. Those whose fortune or talents were less disproportionate, and who were the least removed from the state of Nature, kept the supreme Administration in common and formed a Democracy. Time verified which of these forms was the most advantageous for men. Some remained solely subject to Laws, the others soon obeyed Masters. The Citizens wanted to keep their freedom; the subjects thought only of taking it away from their neighbors, since it was unbearable that others should enjoy a good which they themselves no longer enjoyed. In a word, on one side were wealth and Conquests, and on the other happiness and virtue.

In these various Governments, all Magistracies were at first Elective; and when Wealth did not prevail, preference was accorded to merit, which gives a Natural Ascendancy, and to age, which gives experience in affairs and composure in deliberations. The elders of the Hebrews, the Gerontes of Sparta, the Senate of Rome, and the very Etymology of our word *seigneur*[57] show how much Old Age was respected in former times. The more Elections fell to men advanced in age, the more frequent elections became and the more their difficulties were felt. Intrigues were introduced, factions were formed, parties grew bitter, civil Wars broke out; finally the blood of Citizens was sacrificed to the so-called happiness of the State, and men were at the point of falling back into the Anarchy of earlier times. The ambition of Leading personages profited from these circumstances to perpetuate their posts in their families; the People, already accustomed to dependence, repose, and the conveniences of life, and already incapable of breaking their chains, consented to let their servitude increase in order to assure their tranquillity. Thus the Chiefs, having become hereditary, grew accustomed to consider their Magistracy as a family possession, to regard themselves as proprietors of the State, of

which they were at first only the Officers, to call their Fellow Citizens their Slaves, count them like Cattle in the number of things that belonged to them, and call themselves equals of the Gods and Kings of Kings.

If we follow the progress of inequality in these different revolutions, we shall find that the establishment of the Law and of the Right of property was the first stage, the institution of the Magistracy the second, and the third and last was the changing of legitimate power into arbitrary power. So that the status of rich and poor was authorized by the first Epoch, that of powerful and weak by the second, and by the third that of Master and Slave, which is the last degree of inequality and the limit to which all the others finally lead, until new revolutions dissolve the Government altogether or bring it closer to its legitimate institution.

To understand the necessity of this progress, one must consider less the motives for the establishment of the Body Politic than the form it takes in its execution and the inconveniences it brings along with it: for the vices that make social institutions necessary are the same ones that make their abuse inevitable. And as—excepting Sparta alone, where the Law attended principally to the education of Children and where Lycurgus established morals which almost allowed him to dispense with adding Laws—Laws, in general less strong than passions, contain men without changing them, it would be easy to prove that any Government that, without being corrupted or altered, always worked exactly according to the end of its institution, would have been instituted unnecessarily, and that a Country where no one eluded the Laws and abused the Magistracy would need neither Magistracy nor Laws.

Political distinctions necessarily bring about Civil distinctions. The growing inequality between the People and its Chiefs soon makes itself felt among individuals, where it is modified in a thousand ways according to passions, talents, and events. The Magistrate cannot usurp illegitimate power without creating some protégés to whom he is forced to yield some part of it. Besides, Citizens let themselves be oppressed only insofar as they are carried away by blind ambition; and looking more below than above them, Domination becomes dearer to them than independence, and they consent to wear chains in order to give them to others in turn.[58] It is very difficult to reduce to obedience one who does not seek command; and the most adroit Politician would never succeed in subjecting men who wanted only to be Free. But inequality spreads without difficulty among ambitious and cowardly souls, always ready to run the risks of fortune, and to dominate or serve almost indifferently, according to whether it becomes favorable or adverse to them. Thus there must have

come a time when the eyes of the People were so bewitched that their leaders had only to say to the smallest of men: Be Great, you and all your line; immediately he appeared great to everyone as well as in his own eyes, and his Descendants were exalted even more in proportion to their distance from him. The more remote and uncertain the cause, the more the effect augmented; the more idlers one could count in a family, the more illustrious it became.

If this were the place to go into details, I would easily explain how, even without the involvement of Government, inequality of credit and authority becomes inevitable between Individuals (*15.) as soon as, united (*15.)
in the same Society, they are forced to make comparisons between themselves and to take into account differences they find in the continual use they have to make of one another. These differences are of several kinds; but in general wealth, nobility or rank, Power, and personal merit being the principal distinctions by which one is measured in Society, I would prove that the agreement or conflict of these various forces is the surest indication of a well- or ill-constituted State. I would show that of these four types of inequality, as personal qualities are the origin of all the others, wealth is the last to which they are reduced in the end because, being the most immediately useful to well-being and the easiest to communicate, it is easily used to buy all the rest: an observation which can permit a rather exact judgment of the extent to which each People is removed from its primitive institution, and of the distance it has traveled toward the extreme limit of corruption. I would point out how much that universal desire for reputation, honors, and preferences, which devours us all, trains and compares talents and strengths; how much it stimulates and multiplies passions; and making all men competitors, rivals, or rather enemies, how many reverses, successes, and catastrophes of all kinds it causes daily by making so many Contenders race the same course. I would show that to this ardor to be talked about, to this furor to distinguish oneself, which nearly always keeps us outside of ourselves, we owe what is best and worst among men, our virtues and our vices, our Sciences and our errors, our Conquerors and our Philosophers—that is to say, a multitude of bad things as against a small number of good ones. Finally, I would prove that if one sees a handful of powerful and rich men at the height of grandeur and fortune, while the crowd grovels in obscurity and misery, it is because the former prize the things they enjoy only insofar as the others are deprived of them; and because, without changing their status, they would cease to be happy if the People ceased to be miserable.

But these details alone would be the subject matter of a considerable

work in which one would weigh the advantages and inconveniences of all Governments relative to the Rights of the state of Nature, and where one would unmask all the different faces behind which inequality has appeared until the present and may appear in future Centuries, according to the Nature of these Governments and the revolutions time will necessarily bring about in them. One would see the multitude oppressed within as a consequence of the very precautions it had taken against that which menaced it from without; one would see oppression grow continually, without the oppressed ever being able to know what its limit would be, or what legitimate means would be left them to stop it; one would see the Rights of Citizens and National freedoms die out little by little, and the protests of the weak treated as seditious murmurs; one would see politics limit to a mercenary portion of the People the honor of defending the common cause; from that one would see arise the necessity of taxes, the discouraged Farmer abandoning his field, even during Peacetime, and leaving his plough to buckle on the sword; one would see emerge the fatal and bizarre rules of the point of honor; one would see the defenders of the fatherland become, sooner or later, its Enemies, incessantly holding the dagger over their fellow-citizens, and there would come a time when one would hear them say to the oppressor of their Country:

> *Pectore si fratris gladium juguloque parentis*
> *Condere me jubeas, gravideque in viscera partu*
> *Conjugis, invita peragam tamen omnia dextra.*[59]

From the extreme inequality of Conditions and fortunes, from the diversity of passions and talents, from useless arts, from pernicious arts, from frivolous Sciences would come scores of prejudices equally contrary to reason, happiness, and virtue. One would see Chiefs foment all that can weaken assembled men by disuniting them; all that can give Society an air of apparent concord while spreading a seed of real division; all that can inspire defiance and mutual hatred in different orders through the opposition of their Rights and interests, and consequently fortify the Power that contains them all.

It is from the bosom of this disorder and these revolutions that Despotism, by degrees raising its hideous head and devouring all it had seen to be good and healthy in all parts of the State, would finally succeed in trampling underfoot the Laws and the People, and in establishing itself upon the ruins of the Republic. The times that would precede this last change would be times of troubles and calamities, but in the end everything would be engulfed by the Monster, and Peoples would no longer

have Chiefs or Laws but only Tyrants. From that moment also morals and virtue would cease to be in question; for wherever Despotism reigns, *cui ex honesto nulla est spes,*[60] it tolerates no other master. As soon as it speaks, there is neither probity nor duty to consult, and the blindest obedience is the sole virtue which remains for Slaves.

Here is the last stage of inequality, and the extreme point which closes the Circle and touches the point from which we started. Here all individuals become equals again because they are nothing; and Subjects no longer having any Law except the will of the Master, nor the Master any other rule except his passions, the notions of good and the principles of justice vanish once again. Here everything is brought back to the sole Law of the stronger, and consequently to a new state of Nature different from the one with which we began, in that the one was the State of Nature in its purity, and this last is the fruit of an excess of corruption. Besides, there is so little difference between these two states, and the Contract of Government is so completely dissolved by Despotism, that the Despot is Master only as long as he is the strongest, and as soon as he can be driven out, he cannot protest against violence. The uprising that ends by strangling or dethroning a Sultan is as Lawful an act as those by which he disposed, the day before, of the lives and goods of his Subjects. Force alone maintained him, force alone overthrows him. Everything thus occurs according to the Natural order; and whatever the outcome of these short and frequent revolutions may be, no one can complain of another's injustice, but only of his own imprudence or his misfortune.

In discovering and following thus the forgotten and lost routes that must have led man from the Natural state to the Civil state; in re-establishing, along with the intermediary positions I have just noted, those that the pressure of time has made me suppress or that imagination has not suggested to me, every attentive Reader cannot fail to be struck by the immense space that separates these two states. It is in this slow succession of things that he will see the solution to an infinite number of problems of morality and Politics which the Philosophers cannot resolve. He will sense that, the human Race of one age not being the human Race of another, the reason Diogenes did not find a man was that he sought among his contemporaries the man of a time that no longer existed. Cato, he will say, perished with Rome and freedom because he was out of place in his century; and the greatest of men only astonished the world, which he would have governed five hundred years earlier. In a word, he will explain how the soul and human passions, altering imperceptibly, change their Nature so to speak; why our needs and our plea-

sures change their objects in the long run; why, original man vanishing by degrees, Society no longer offers to the eyes of the wise man anything except an assemblage of artificial men and factitious passions which are the work of all these new relations and have no true foundation in Nature. What reflection teaches us on this subject, observation confirms perfectly: Savage man and Civilized man differ so much in the bottom of their Hearts and inclinations that what constitutes the supreme happiness of one would reduce the other to despair. The former breathes only repose and freedom; he wants only to live and remain idle; and even the perfect quietude of the Stoic does not approach his profound indifference for all other objects. On the contrary, the Citizen, always active, sweats, agitates himself, torments himself incessantly in order to seek still more laborious occupations; he works to death, he even rushes to it in order to get in condition to live, or renounces life in order to acquire immortality. He pays court to the great whom he hates, and to the rich whom he scorns. He spares nothing in order to obtain the honor of serving them; he proudly boasts of his baseness and their protection; and proud of his slavery, he speaks with disdain of those who do not have the honor of sharing it. What a Sight the difficult and envied labors of a European Minister are for a Carib! How many cruel deaths would that indolent Savage not prefer to the horror of such a life, which often is not even sweetened by the pleasure of doing good. But in order to see the goal of so many cares, the words *power* and *reputation* would have to have a meaning in his mind; he would have to learn that there is a kind of men who count for something the consideration of the rest of the universe and who know how to be happy and content with themselves on the testimony of others rather than on their own. Such is, in fact, the genuine cause of all these differences: the Savage lives within himself; the sociable man, always outside of himself, knows how to live only in the opinion of others; and it is, so to speak, from their judgment alone that he draws the sentiment of his own existence. It is not part of my subject to show how, from such a disposition, so much indifference for good and evil arises along with such fine discourses on morality; how, everything being reduced to appearances, everything becomes artificial and deceptive: honor, friendship, virtue, and often even vices themselves, about which men finally discover the secret of boasting; how, in a word, always asking others what we are and never daring to question ourselves on this subject in the midst of so much Philosophy, humanity, politeness, and Sublime maxims, we have only a deceitful and frivolous exterior, honor without virtue, reason without wisdom, and pleasure without

happiness. It is sufficient for me to have proved that this is not the original state of man; and that it is the spirit of Society alone, and the inequality it engenders, which thus change and alter all our natural inclinations.

I have tried to set forth the origin and progress of inequality, the establishment and abuse of political Societies, insofar as these things can be deduced from the Nature of man by the light of reason alone, and independently of the sacred Dogmas which give to Sovereign authority the Sanction of Divine Right. It follows from this exposition that inequality, being almost null in the state of Nature, draws its force and growth from the development of our faculties and the progress of the human Mind, and finally becomes stable and legitimate by the establishment of property and Laws. It follows, further, that moral inequality, authorized by positive right alone, is contrary to Natural Right whenever it is not combined in the same proportion with Physical inequality: a distinction which sufficiently determines what one ought to think in this regard of the sort of inequality that reigns among all civilized Peoples; since it is manifestly against the Law of Nature, in whatever manner it is defined, that a child command an old man, an imbecile lead a wise man, and a handful of men be glutted with superfluities while the starving multitude lacks necessities.[61]

Rousseau's Notes

*Page 4 (*1.)*: Herodotus relates that after the murder of the false Smerdis, the seven liberators of Persia being assembled to deliberate upon the form of Government they would give the State, Otanes was strongly in favor of a republic: an opinion all the more extraordinary in the mouth of a Satrap as, besides the claim he could have to the empire, grandees fear more than death a sort of Government that forces them to respect men. Otanes, as may easily be believed, was not heeded; and seeing that they were going to proceed to the election of a Monarch, he, who wanted neither to obey nor command, voluntarily yielded his right to the crown to the other Competitors, asking as his only compensation that he and his posterity be free and independent. This was granted him.[62] If Herodotus did not inform us of the restriction that was placed on this Privilege, it would be necessary to suppose it; otherwise Otanes, not recognizing any sort of Law and being accountable to no one, would have been all-powerful in the State and more powerful than the King himself.[63] But there was hardly any likelihood that a man capable of contenting himself with such a privilege, in a case like that, was capable of

abusing it. In fact, it cannot be seen that this right ever caused the least trouble in the Kingdom, either by wise Otanes or by any of his descendants.[64]

*Page 12 (*2.)*: From the outset I rely with confidence upon one of those authorities that are respectable for Philosophers because they come from a solid and sublime reason, which philosophers alone know how to find and appreciate.

> "Whatever interest we may have to know ourselves I am not sure whether we do not know better everything that is not ourselves. Provided by Nature with organs destined uniquely for our preservation, we use them only to receive foreign impressions, we seek only to extend beyond ourselves, and exist outside ourselves. Too busy multiplying the functions of our senses and augmenting the external range of our being, we rarely make use of that internal sense which reduces us to our true dimensions, and which separates from us all that is not part of us. However, it is this sense we must use if we wish to know ourselves; it is the only one by which we can judge ourselves. But how can this sense be made active and given its full range? How can we rid our Soul, in which it resides, of all the illusions of our Mind? We have lost the habit of using it, it has remained without exercise in the midst of the tumult of our bodily sensations, it has been dried out by the fire of our passions; heart, mind, senses, everything has worked against it." *Hist. Nat.,* T. 4, p. 151, de la Nat. de l'homme.[65]

*Page 20 (*3.)*: The changes that a long habit of walking on two feet could have produced in the conformation of man, the relationships still noted between his arms and the Forelegs of Quadrupeds, and the induction drawn from their way of walking, have given rise to doubts about the way that must have been most natural for us. All children begin by walking on all fours, and need our example and our lessons to learn to stand up. There are even Savage Nations, such as the Hottentots, who, greatly neglecting their Children, let them walk on their hands for so long that they then have great difficulty making them straighten up; the children of the Caribs of the Antilles do the same thing. There are various examples of Quadruped men; and among others I could cite that of the Child who was found in 1344 near Hesse, where he had been raised by Wolves, and who said afterward at the Court of Prince Henry that if it had been up to him, he would have preferred to return to them than to live among men. He had so thoroughly adopted the habit of walking like those animals that it was necessary to attach Pieces of wood to him that forced him to stand up and keep his balance on two feet. The same was true of the Child who was found in 1694 in the forests of Lithuania, and who lived among Bears. He gave no sign of reason, says Mr. de Condil-

lac, walked on his hands and feet, had no language, and formed sounds having no resemblance whatever to those of a man.[66] The little Savage of Hanover, who was taken to the Court of England some years ago, had all the trouble in the world to make himself walk on two feet; and in 1719 two other Savages, found in the Pyrenees, ran through the mountains in the manner of quadrupeds. As for the objection one could make that this deprives man of the use of his hands, from which we derive so many advantages, besides the example of monkeys, which shows that the hand can very well be used in both ways, it would prove only that man can give his limbs a destination more useful than that of Nature, and not that Nature destined man to walk otherwise than it teaches him to do.[67]

But there are, it seems to me, far better reasons to state in affirming that man is a biped. First, even if it is shown that he could originally have been formed otherwise than we see him and nonetheless finally become what he is, this would not be enough to conclude that it happened thus; for, after having shown the possibility of these changes, it would still be necessary, before accepting them, at least to demonstrate their probability. Furthermore, if man's arms apparently were able to serve as Legs when needed, this is the only observation favorable to that system, against a great number of others which are opposed to it. The principal ones are that the manner in which man's head is attached to his body, instead of directing his sight horizontally—as do all the other animals, and as he himself does when walking erect—would have kept him, walking on all fours, with his eyes directly fastened on the ground, a situation but little favorable to the preservation of the individual; that the tail he lacks, and of which he has no need walking on two feet, is useful to quadrupeds, and none of them is deprived of one; that the breast of a woman, very well placed for a biped who holds her child in her arms, is so badly placed for a quadruped that none has it that way; that the rear quarters being of an excessive height in proportion to the forelegs—so that when walking on all fours we crawl on our knees—the whole would have been an Animal ill proportioned and walking uncomfortably; that if he had set his foot down flat as well as the hand, he would have had one less articulation in the posterior leg than do other animals, namely the one that joins the Canon bone to the Tibia; and that setting down only the tip of the foot, as he doubtless would have been constrained to do, the tarsus—without speaking of the plurality of bones composing it—seems too large to take the place of the canon bone, and its Articulations with the Metatarsus and the Tibia too close together to give the human leg, in this position, the same flexibility as those of quadrupeds. The example of Children, as it is taken from an age when natural forces

are not as yet developed nor the limbs strengthened, proves nothing whatever; and I might as well say that dogs are not destined to walk because they only crawl several weeks after their birth. Particular facts also have little force against the universal practice of all men, even Nations that, having had no communication with others, could not have imitated anything from them. A Child abandoned in a forest before he is able to walk, and nourished by some beast, will have followed the example of his Nurse in training himself to walk like her; habit could have given him dexterity he did not have from Nature; and as armless People succeed, by dint of training, in doing everything with their feet that we do with our hands, he will finally have succeeded in using his hands as feet.

*Page 20 (*a.)*: Should there be found among my Readers a bad enough Physical Scientist to raise difficulties about the supposition of this natural fertility of the earth, I am going to answer him with the following passage:

> "As plants draw much more substance for their nourishment from air and water than they draw from the earth, it happens that when they rot they return more to the earth than they took from it; besides, a forest retains the waters from rain by stopping vapors. Thus, in woods that had been preserved for a long time without being touched, the layer of earth that serves for vegetation would augment considerably; but as Animals give back less than they take from the earth, and as men consume enormous quantities of wood and plants for fire and other uses, it follows that the layer of vegetative earth in an inhabited country must always diminish and finally become like the terrain of Arabia Petraea,[68] and like that of so many other Provinces of the East—which is in fact the Region of most ancient habitation—where only Salt and Sand are found. For the fixed Salt of Plants and Animals remains, while all the other parts are volatilized." Mr. de Buffon, *Hist. Nat.*[69]

To this one can add factual proof from the quantity of trees and plants of all kinds covering almost all the deserted Islands discovered in recent centuries, and from what history teaches us about the immense forests that had to be felled all over the earth as it was populated or Civilized. On these things I shall further make the following three remarks. First, if there is a kind of vegetation that can compensate for the loss of vegetable matter brought about by animals according to M. de Buffon's reasoning, it is above all woods, the tops and leaves of which collect and appropriate more water and vapors than other plants do. Second, destruction of the soil, that is to say, the loss of the substance suited to vegetation, must accelerate in proportion as the earth is more cultivated and as more industrious inhabitants consume in greater abundance its

products of all kinds. My third and most important remark is that the fruits of Trees furnish animals with more abundant food than other forms of vegetation can: an experiment I made myself, by comparing the products of two fields equal in size and quality, the one covered with chestnut trees and the other sown with wheat.[70]

*Page 21 (*4.)*: Among the Quadrupeds, the two most universal distinguishing characteristics of voracious species are derived from the shape of the Teeth, and the conformation of the Intestines. Animals that live only on vegetation all have blunt teeth, like the Horse, Ox, Sheep, Hare; but Voracious animals have pointed ones, like the Cat, Dog, Wolf, Fox. And as for the Intestines, the Frugivorous ones have some, such as the Colon, that are not found in voracious Animals. It therefore seems that Man, having Teeth and Intestines like those of Frugivorous Animals, should naturally be placed in that Class; and not only do anatomical observations confirm this opinion, but the great works of Antiquity are also very favorable to it.

"Dicaearchus,"[71] says Saint Jerome, "relates in his Books on Greek Antiquities that under the reign of Saturn, when the Earth was still fertile by itself, no man ate Flesh, but that all lived on Fruits and Vegetables which grew naturally." (Lib. 2. *Adv. Jovinian.*)[72] That opinion can also be confirmed by the reports of several modern Travelers. François Corréal, among others, testifies that most of the Inhabitants of the Lucayes whom the Spanish transported to the islands of Cuba, Santo Domingo, and elsewhere, died from having eaten flesh. From this it may be seen that I neglect many favorable points I could exploit. For as prey is almost the unique subject of fighting among Carnivorous Animals, and as Frugivorous ones live among themselves in continual peace, if the human species were of this latter genus it clearly would have had much greater ease subsisting in the state of Nature, and much less need and occasion to leave it.

*Page 21 (*5.)*: All Knowledge that requires reflection, all knowledge acquired only by the linking of ideas and perfected only successively, seems to be altogether beyond the reach of Savage man for want of communication with his fellows—that is to say, for want of the instrument which is used for that communication and for want of the needs which make it necessary. His knowledge and his industry are limited to jumping, running, fighting, throwing a stone, scaling a tree. But if he knows only these things, in return he knows them much better than we, who do not have the same need of them as he does; and since they depend

solely on Bodily exercise and are not susceptible of any communication or progress from one individual to another, the first man could have been just as skillful at them as his last descendants.

The reports of travelers are full of examples of the strength and vigor of men in barbarous and Savage Nations; they praise scarcely less their dexterity and nimbleness: and as eyes alone are needed to observe these things, nothing prevents our giving credence to what eye witnesses certify about them.[73] I draw some examples at random from the first books that come to hand.

> "The Hottentots," says Kolben, "understand fishing better than the Europeans of the Cape. They are equally skilled with net, hook, and barb, in coves as well as in rivers. They catch fish by hand no less skillfully. They are incomparably dextrous at swimming. Their manner of swimming has something surprising about it, which is altogether peculiar to them. They swim with their body upright and their hands stretched out of the water, so that they appear to be walking on land. In the greatest agitation of the sea, when the waves form so many mountains, they somehow dance on the crest of the waves, rising and falling like a piece of cork.[74]
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> "The Hottentots," the same Author says further, "have surprising dexterity at hunting, and the nimbleness of their running surpasses the imagination." He is amazed that they do not more often put their agility to bad use, which sometimes happens, however, as can be judged from the example he gives. "A Dutch sailor, disembarking at the Cape," he says, "engaged a Hottentot to follow him to the City with a roll of tobacco weighing about twenty pounds. When they were both at some distance from the Crew, the Hottentot asked the Sailor if he knew how to run. Run? answered the Dutchman; yes, very well. Let us see, replied the African; and fleeing with the tobacco, he disappeared almost immediately. The Sailor, astounded by such marvelous speed, did not think of chasing him, and he never again saw either his tobacco or his porter.
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> "They have such quick sight and such a sure hand that Europeans cannot come close to them. At a hundred paces they will hit a mark the size of a halfpenny with a stone; and what is more astonishing, instead of fixing their eyes on the target, as we do, they make continuous movements and contortions. It seems that their stone is carried by an invisible hand."[75]

Father du Tertre says, concerning the Savages of the Antilles, approximately the same things that have just been read concerning the Hottentots of the Cape of Good Hope. He praises above all their accuracy in shooting, with arrows, flying birds and swimming fish, which they then catch by diving. The Savages of North America are no less famous for their strength and dexterity, and here is an example that will permit us to judge those of the Indians of South America.

In the year 1746, an Indian from Buenos Aires, having been condemned to the Galleys at Cadiz, proposed to the Governor that he redeem his freedom by risking his life at a public festival. He promised that

by himself he would attack the fiercest Bull with no other weapon in hand than a rope; that he would bring it to the ground, seize it with his rope by whatever part they would indicate, saddle it, bridle it, mount it, and so mounted, fight two other Bulls of the fiercest kind to be let out of the Torillo; and that he would put them all to death, one after another, at the instant they would command him to do so, and without help from anyone. This was granted him. The Indian kept his word, and succeeded in everything he had promised. On the way in which he did it and on all the detail of the fight, one can consult the first volume, in-12°, of *Observations sur l'histoire Naturelle* by Mr. Gautier, page 262, from which this fact is taken.[76]

*Page 23 (*d.)*: "The length of the life of Horses," says M. de Buffon, "as in all other species of animals, is proportionate to the length of time of their growth. Man, who takes fourteen years to grow, can live six or seven times as long, that is to say ninety or one hundred years; the Horse, whose growth is completed in four years, can live six or seven times as long, that is to say twenty-five or thirty years. The examples that could be contrary to this rule are so rare that they should not even be considered as an exception from which conclusions can be drawn; and just as heavy horses reach their growth in less time than delicate horses, so they live less time, and are old from the age of fifteen."[77]

*Page 23 (*6.)*: I believe I see another difference between carnivorous and frugivorous animals which is still more general than the one I remarked upon in note (*4), since this one extends to birds. This difference consists in the number of young, which never exceeds two in each litter for the species that live only on vegetables, and which ordinarily goes beyond this number for voracious animals. It is easy to know Nature's design in this regard by the number of teats, which is only two in each female of the first species, like the Mare, Cow, Goat, Doe, Ewe, etc. and which is always six or eight in the other females, like the Bitch, Cat, Wolf, Tigress, etc. The Hen, Goose, Duck, which are all voracious Birds, as are the Eagle, Sparrow-hawk, Screech-owl, also lay and hatch a large number of eggs, which never happens to the Pigeon, Turtle-dove, nor to Birds that eat absolutely nothing except grain, which hardly ever lay and hatch more than two eggs at a time. The reason that can be given for this difference is that animals that live only on grasses and plants, remaining almost the entire day at pasture and being forced to spend much time nourishing themselves, could not be adequate to the nursing of several young; whereas voracious ones, having their meal almost in an instant,

can more easily and more frequently return to their young and their hunting, and compensate for the dissipation of such a large quantity of Milk. There would be many particular observations and reflections to make about all this, but this is not the place for them, and it is sufficient for me to have shown in this part the most general System of Nature, a System which furnishes a new reason to withdraw man from the Class of carnivorous animals and to place him among the frugivorous species.

*Page 26 (*7.)*: A famous Author calculating the goods and evils of human life, and comparing the two sums, found that the latter greatly surpassed the former, and that all things considered life was a rather poor present to man. I am not surprised by his conclusion; he drew all his reasons from the constitution of Civil man. If he had gone back to Natural man, it can be concluded that he would have found very different results; he would have perceived that man has hardly any evils other than those he has given himself, and that Nature would have been justified. It is not without difficulty that we have succeeded in making ourselves so unhappy. When, on the one hand, one considers the vast labors of men, so many Sciences fathomed, so many arts invented, and so many forces employed, chasms filled, mountains razed, rocks broken, rivers made navigable, land cleared, lakes dug out, swamps drained, enormous buildings raised upon the earth, the sea covered with Ships and Sailors; and when, on the other hand, one searches with a little meditation for the true advantages that have resulted from all this for the happiness of the human species, one cannot fail to be struck by the astounding disproportion prevailing between these things, and to deplore man's blindness, which, to feed his foolish pride and an indefinable vain admiration for himself, makes him run avidly after all the miseries of which he is susceptible, and which beneficent Nature had taken care to keep from him.[78]

Men are wicked; sad and continual experience spares the need for proof. However, man is naturally good; I believe I have demonstrated it. What then can have depraved him to this extent, if not the changes that have befallen his constitution, the progress he has made, and the knowledge he has acquired? Let human Society be as highly admired as one wants; it is nonetheless true that it necessarily brings men to hate each other in proportion to the conflict of their interests, to render each other apparent services and in fact do every imaginable harm to one another. What is to be thought of intercourse in which the reason of each individual dictates to him maxims directly contrary to those that public reason preaches to the body of Society, and in which each man finds his profit in the misfortune of others? There is perhaps no well-to-do man

whose death is not secretly hoped for by avid heirs and often his own children; no Ship at Sea whose wreck would not be good news to some Merchant; no firm that a debtor of bad faith would not wish to see burned along with all the papers it contains; no People that does not rejoice about the disasters of its neighbors. Thus do we find our advantage in the detriment of our fellows, and someone's loss almost always creates another's prosperity. But what is still more dangerous is that public calamities are awaited and hoped for by a multitude of individuals. Some want illnesses, others death, others war, others famine. I have seen atrocious men weep with sadness at the probability of a fertile year; and the great and deadly fire of London, which cost the life or goods of so many unfortunates, perhaps made the fortune of more than ten thousand People. I know that Montaigne blames the Athenian Demades for having had a Worker punished who, by selling coffins at a high price, gained a great deal from the death of Citizens. But as the reason Montaigne advances is that everyone would have to be punished, it is evident that it confirms my own.[79] Let us therefore penetrate, through our frivolous demonstrations of good will, what goes on at the bottom of our Hearts, and let us reflect on what the state of things must be where all men are forced to flatter and destroy one another, and where they are born enemies by duty and swindlers by interest. If I am answered that Society is so constituted that each man gains by serving the others, I shall reply that this would be very well, if he did not gain still more by harming them. There is no profit, however legitimate, that is not surpassed by one that can be made illegitimately, and wrong done to one's neighbor is always more lucrative than services. Therefore it is no longer a question of anything except finding ways to be assured of impunity; and it is for this that the powerful use all their strength and the weak all their ruses.

Zero sum theory

Savage man, when he has eaten, is at peace with all Nature, and the friend of all his fellows. If it is sometimes a question of disputing his meal, he never comes to blows without first having compared the difficulty of winning with that of finding his subsistence elsewhere; and as pride is not involved in the fight, it is ended by a few blows; the victor eats, the vanquished goes off to seek his fortune, and all is pacified. But for man in Society these are altogether different affairs: it is first of all a question of providing for the necessary, and then for the superfluous; next come delights, then immense wealth, and then subjects, and then Slaves; he does not have a moment of respite. What is most singular is that the less natural and urgent the needs, the more the passions augment, and, what is worse, the power to satisfy them; so that after long prosperity, after having swallowed up many treasures and desolated

many men, my Hero will end by ruining everything until he is the sole master of the Universe. Such in brief is the moral picture, if not of human life, at least of the secret pretensions of the Heart of every Civilized man.

Compare, without prejudices, the state of Civil man with that of Savage man, and seek if you can how many new doors—other than his wickedness, his needs, and his miseries—the former has opened to suffering and death. If you consider the mental anguish that consumes us, the violent passions that exhaust and desolate us, the excessive labors with which the poor are overburdened, the still more dangerous softness to which the rich abandon themselves, and which cause the former to die of their needs and the latter of their excesses; if you think of the monstrous mixtures of foods, their pernicious seasonings, corrupted foodstuffs, falsified drugs, the knavery of those who sell them, the errors of those who administer them, the poison of the containers in which they are prepared; if you pay attention to the epidemic illnesses engendered by the bad air among the multitudes of men gathered together, to the illnesses occasioned by the delicacy of our way of life, by the alternating movements from the interior of our houses into the fresh air, the use of garments put on or taken off with too little precaution, and all the cares that our excessive sensuality has turned into necessary habits, the neglect or privation of which then costs us our life or our health; if you take into account fires and earthquakes which, burning or upsetting whole Cities, cause their inhabitants to die by the thousands; in a word, if you unite the dangers that all these causes continually gather over our heads, you will sense how dearly Nature makes us pay for the scorn we have shown for its lessons.

I shall not repeat here what I have said elsewhere about war;[80] but I wish that informed men wanted or dared, for once, to give the public the detail of the horrors committed in armies by supply and Hospital Entrepreneurs. One would see that their not overly secret maneuvers, because of which the most brilliant armies dissolve into less than nothing, cause more Soldiers to perish than are cut down by the enemy's sword. It is no less astonishing, further, to calculate the men swallowed up by the sea every year, either by hunger, or scurvy, or Pirates, or fire, or shipwreck. It is clear that to established property, and consequently to Society, must be attributed the assassinations, poisonings, highway robberies, and even the punishments of these crimes: punishments that are necessary to prevent greater evils, but which, costing the lives of two or more for the murder of one man, nevertheless actually double the loss to the human species. How many shameful ways there are to prevent the birth of men and trick Nature; either by those brutal and depraved tastes that insult

its most charming work, tastes that neither Savages nor animals ever knew and that have arisen in Civilized countries only from a corrupt imagination; or by those secret abortions, worthy fruits of debauchery and vicious honor; or by the exposure or murder of a multitude of infants, victims of the misery of their parents or the barbarous shame of their Mothers; or, finally, by the mutilation of those unfortunates, for whom a part of their existence and all their posterity are sacrificed to vain songs or, worse yet, to the brutal jealousy of a few men: a mutilation which, in this last case, doubly outrages Nature, both by the treatment given those who suffer it and by the use to which they are destined!

But are there not a thousand more frequent and even more dangerous cases in which paternal rights openly offend humanity? How many talents are buried and inclinations forced by the imprudent constraint of Fathers! How many men would have distinguished themselves in an appropriate status who die unhappy and dishonored in another status for which they had no taste! How many happy but unequal marriages have been broken or disturbed, and how many chaste wives dishonored, by this order of conditions always in contradiction with that of Nature! How many other bizarre unions formed by interest and disavowed by love and reason! How many even honest and virtuous spouses torture one another because of being ill-mated! How many young and unhappy victims of their Parents' avarice plunge into vice or spend their sad days in tears, and groan in indissoluble chains which the Heart rejects and which gold alone has formed! Happy sometimes are those women whose courage and even virtue tear them from life before barbarous violence forces them into crime or despair. Forgive me, Father and Mother forever deplorable: I regretfully embitter your suffering; but may it serve as an eternal and terrible example to anyone who dares, in the very name of Nature, to violate the most sacred of its rights!

If I have spoken only of those ill-formed unions that are the product of our Civilization, is it to be thought that those over which love and sympathy have presided are themselves without disadvantages? What would happen if I undertook to show the human species attacked at its very source, and even in the most holy of all bonds, where one no longer dares to listen to Nature until after consulting his fortune, and where, with Civil disorder confusing virtues and vices, continence becomes a criminal precaution and the refusal to give life to one's Fellow-man an act of humanity? But without tearing off the veil that covers so many horrors, let us be content to indicate the evil for which others must furnish the remedy.

Add to all this that quantity of unhealthy trades which shorten lives

or destroy the physique, such as labor in mines, various preparations of metals and minerals, especially Lead, Copper, Mercury, Cobalt, Arsenic, Realgar; those other perilous trades which daily cost the life of a number of workers, some of them Roofers, others Carpenters, others Masons, others working in quarries; gather all these things together, I say, and one will be able to see in the establishment and perfection of Societies the reasons for the diminution of the species observed by more than one Philosopher.[81]

Luxury, impossible to prevent among men greedy for their own commodities and the esteem of others, soon completes the evil that Societies began; and on the pretext of keeping alive the poor who should not have been made so, luxury impoverishes everyone else, and depopulates the State sooner or later.

Luxury is a remedy far worse than the evil it claims to cure; or rather it is itself the worst of all evils in any State whatever, whether large or small, and in order to feed the crowds of Lackeys and miserable people it has created, it crushes and ruins the farmer and the Citizen, like those burning winds in the south which, covering the grass and greenery with devouring insects, take subsistence away from useful animals, and bring famine and death to every place where they make themselves felt.

From Society and the luxury it engenders arise the liberal and mechanical Arts, Commerce, Letters, and all those useless things which make industry flourish, enrich and ruin States. The reason for this deterioration is very simple. It is easy to see that, by its Nature, agriculture must be the least lucrative of all the arts, because its product being of the most indispensable use to all men, its price must be in proportion to the abilities of the poorest. From the same principle can be drawn this rule: in general the Arts are lucrative in inverse ratio to their utility, and the most necessary must finally become the most neglected. From this one sees what must be thought of the true advantages of industry and of the real effect that results from its progress.

Such are the perceptible causes of all the miseries into which opulence finally precipitates the most admired Nations. As industry and the arts spread and flower, the scorned cultivator, burdened with taxes necessary for the maintenance of Luxury and condemned to spend his life between labor and hunger, abandons his fields to go to the Cities in search of the bread he ought to carry there. The more capital cites impress the stupid eyes of the People as admirable, the more it will be necessary to groan when seeing the abandoned Countryside, fallow fields, and main routes flooded with unhappy Citizens who have become beggars or thieves, destined to end their misery one day on the rack or on a dung-heap.

Thus the State, enriching itself on one hand, weakens and depopulates itself on the other, and thus the most powerful Monarchies, after much labor to become opulent and deserted, end by becoming the prey of poor Nations which succumb to the deadly temptation to invade them, and which grow rich and weak in their turn, until they are themselves invaded and destroyed by others.

Let someone deign to explain to us for once what could have produced those hordes of Barbarians who, for so many centuries, inundated Europe, Asia, and Africa. Was it to the industry of their Arts, the Wisdom of their Laws, and the excellence of their Civil order that they owed that prodigious population? Let our learned men have the goodness to tell us why, far from multiplying to that point, those ferocious and brutal men, without enlightenment, without restraint, without education, did not all murder one another at every moment in disputing their food or game. Let them explain how these miserable men had even the boldness to look in the eye such clever men as we were, with such fine military discipline, such fine Codes and such wise Laws; and why, finally, after Society was perfected in the countries of the North, and so many pains taken there to teach men their mutual duties and the art of living together agreeably and peaceably, nothing more is seen to come from them like those multitudes of men it produced formerly. I am very fearful that someone may finally think of answering me that all these great things, namely the Arts, Sciences, and Laws, have been very Wisely invented by men as a Salutary plague to prevent the excessive multiplication of the species, for fear that this world, which is destined for us, might finally become too small for its inhabitants.

What! must we destroy Societies, annihilate thine and mine, and go back to live in forests with Bears? A conclusion in the manner of my adversaries, which I prefer to anticipate rather than leave them the shame of drawing it. Oh you, to whom the heavenly voice has not made itself heard and who recognize no other destination for your species than to end this brief life in peace; you who can leave your fatal acquisitions, your worried minds, your corrupt Hearts, and your unbridled desires in the midst of Cities; reclaim, since it is up to you, your ancient and first innocence; go into the woods to lose sight and memory of the crimes of your contemporaries, and have no fear of debasing your species in renouncing its enlightenment in order to renounce its vices. As for men like me, whose passions have forever destroyed their original simplicity, who can no longer nourish themselves on grass and nuts, nor do without Laws and Chiefs; Those who were honored in their first Father with supernatural lessons;[82] those who will see, in the intention of giving hu-

man actions a morality from the start which they would not have acquired for a long time, the reason for a precept indifferent in itself and inexplicable in any other System;[83] Those, in a word, who are convinced that the divine voice called the whole human Race to the enlightenment and happiness of celestial Intelligences: all those will endeavor, through the exercise of virtues they obligate themselves to practice while learning to know them, to deserve the eternal reward they ought to expect from them; they will respect the sacred bonds of the Societies of which they are members; they will love their fellows and will serve them with all their power; they will scrupulously obey the Laws, and the men who are their Authors and Ministers; they will honor above all the good and wise Princes who will know how to prevent, cure, or palliate that multitude of abuses and evils always ready to crush us; they will animate the zeal of these worthy Chiefs, by showing them without fear and flattery the greatness of their task and the rigor of their duty. But they will nonetheless scorn a constitution that can be maintained only with the help of so many respectable People—who are desired more often than obtained—and from which, despite all their care, always arise more real calamities than apparent advantages.[84]

*Page 27 (*8.)*: Among the men we know, whether by ourselves, from Historians, or from travelers, some are black, others white, others red; some wear their hair long, others have only curly wool; some are almost entirely hairy, others do not even have a Beard. There have been, and there perhaps still are, Nations of men of gigantic size; and apart from the fable of the Pygmies, which may well be only an exaggeration, it is known that the Laplanders, and above all the Greenlanders, are well below the average size of man. It is even claimed that there are whole Peoples that have tails like quadrupeds. And without accepting in blind faith the reports of Herodotus and Ctesias, one can at least draw from them this very likely opinion: if one had been able to make good observations in those ancient times when various Peoples followed ways of life with greater differences between them than Peoples do today, one would also have noted, in the shape and habits of the body, much more striking varieties. All these facts, for which it is easy to furnish incontestable proofs, can surprise only those who are accustomed to look solely at the objects surrounding them, and who are ignorant of the powerful effects of the diversity of Climates, air, foods, way of life, habits in general, and above all the astonishing force of the same causes when they act continually upon long sequences of generations. Today when commerce, Voyages, and conquests unite various Peoples more, and their ways of life

are constantly brought closer together by frequent communication, it is perceived that certain national differences have diminished; and, for example, everyone can see that the French of today are no longer those large, pale, and blond-haired bodies described by Latin Historians, although time, together with the admixture of the Francs and Normans, themselves pale and blond-haired, ought to have re-established what the frequentation of the Romans could have removed from the influence of the Climate in the natural constitution and complexion of the inhabitants. All these observations upon the varieties that a thousand causes can produce and have in fact produced in the human Species make me wonder whether various animals similar to men, taken by travelers for Beasts without much examination, either because of a few differences they noted in exterior conformation or solely because these Animals did not speak, would not in fact be genuine Savage men whose race, dispersed in the woods in ancient times, had not had an opportunity to develop any of its potential faculties, had not acquired any degree of perfection, and was still found in the primitive state of Nature. Let me give an example of what I mean.

"In the Kingdom of the Congo," says the translator of the *Histoire des voyages*, "are found many of those large Animals called Orangutan in the East Indies, which are a sort of middle point between the human species and the Baboons. Battel relates that in the forests of Mayomba, in the kingdom of Loango, two kinds of Monsters are seen, of which the larger are named *Pongos* and the others *Enjocos*. The former resemble man exactly, but they are much heavier and very tall. With a human face, they have very deep-set eyes. Their hands, cheeks and ears are hairless, except for eyebrows which are very long. Although the rest of their body is rather hairy, the hair is not very thick, and its color is brown. Finally, the only part that distinguishes them from men is their leg, which has no calf. They walk upright, holding each other by the hair of the Neck; their retreat is in the woods; they sleep in Trees, and there they make a kind of roof which shelters them from rain. Their foods are fruits or Wild nuts. They never eat flesh. The custom of Negroes who cross the forests is to light fires during the night; they note that in the morning, at their departure, the Pongos take their place around the fire, and do not withdraw until it is out; for with all their cleverness, they do not have enough sense to keep it going by bringing wood to it.

"They sometimes walk in groups and kill Negroes who cross the forests. They even fall upon elephants that come to graze in the places they inhabit, and annoy them so with punches or sticks that they force them to flee screaming. Pongos are never taken alive because they are so robust that ten men would not suffice to stop them. But the Negroes take many young ones after killing the Mother, to whose Body the young are strongly attached. When one of these Animals dies, the others cover its body with a Heap of branches or leaves. Purchass adds that in the conversations he had with Battel he learned from him that a Pongo kidnapped a little Negro who spent a whole month in the Society of these Animals, for they do no harm to men they take

by surprise, at least when the latter do not pay attention to them, as the little Negro had observed. Battel did not describe the second species of monster.

"Dapper confirms that the Kingdom of the Congo is full of those animals which in the Indies have the name Orangutans, that is to say, inhabitants of the woods, and which the Africans call *Quojas Morros*. This Beast, he says, is so similar to man that it came to the mind of some travelers that it might have issued from a woman and a monkey: a chimera which even the Negroes reject. One of these animals was transported from the Congo to Holland, and presented to the Prince of Orange, Frederick-Henry. It was the height of a three-year-old Child, and moderately stout but square and well-proportioned, very agile and lively, its legs fleshy and robust, the whole front of its body naked but the back covered with black hair. At first sight its face resembled that of a man, but it had a flat and curved nose; its ears were also those of the human Species; its breast, for it was a female, was plump, its navel deep, its shoulders very well joined, its hands divided into fingers and thumbs, its calves and heels fat and fleshy. It often walked upright on its legs, it was able to lift and carry rather heavy loads. When it wanted to drink, it took the cover of the pot in one hand, and held the base with the other, afterward it graciously wiped its lips. It lay down to sleep with its head on a Pillow, covering itself so skillfully that one would have taken it for a man in bed. The Negroes tell strange tales about this animal. They assert not only that it does violence to women and girls, but that it dares to attack armed men. In a word, there is great likelihood that it is the Satyr of the Ancients. Merolla perhaps speaks of none other than these Animals when he relates that Negroes sometimes catch Savage men and women in their hunts."[85]

These species of Anthropomorphic animals are spoken of again in the third volume of the same *Histoire des Voyages* under the name of *Beggos* and *Mandrills*. But to limit ourselves to the preceding reports, in the description of these supposed monsters are found striking conformities with the human species and lesser differences than those which could be assigned between one man and another. In these passages one does not see the reasons the Authors have for refusing to give the Animals in question the name of Savage men; but it is easy to guess that it is due to their stupidity and also because they did not talk: weak reasons for those who know that although the organ of speech is natural to man, speech itself is nonetheless not natural to him, and who know to what point his perfectibility can have raised Civil man above his original state. The small number of lines these descriptions contain can enable us to judge how badly these Animals were observed, and with what prejudices they were seen. For example, they are qualified as monsters, and yet it is agreed that they reproduce. In one place, Battel says that the Pongos kill Negroes who cross the forests; in another, Purchass adds that they do not do them any harm, even when they surprise them, at least when the Negroes make no effort to pay attention to them. The Pongos gather around fires lit by Negroes when the latter withdraw, and withdraw in turn when the fire

is out: there is the fact. Here now is the commentary of the observer: *for with all their cleverness, they do not have enough sense to keep it going by bringing wood to it*. I would like to guess how Battel, or Purchass, his compiler, could have known that the withdrawal of the Pongos was an effect of their stupidity rather than their will. In a climate such as Loango, fire is not a very necessary thing for Animals; and if the Negroes light it, it is less against the cold than to frighten wild beasts. It is therefore a very simple thing that having enjoyed the blaze for some time, or being well warmed, the Pongos are bored with always staying in the same place and go off to find food, which requires more time than if they ate flesh. Besides, it is known that most animals, not excepting man, are naturally lazy, and that they deny themselves all kinds of cares that are not of an absolute necessity. Finally, it seems very strange that the Pongos whose skill and strength is praised, the Pongos who know how to bury their dead and make themselves roofs out of branches, should not know how to push wood into the fire. I remember having seen a monkey perform the same maneuver that it is denied a Pongo can do. It is true that my ideas not then being directed to this problem, I myself committed the error for which I reproach our travelers, and I neglected to examine whether the monkey's intention was in fact to sustain the fire or simply, as I believe, to imitate the action of a man. Whatever the case, it is well demonstrated that the Monkey is not a variety of man, not only because he is deprived of the faculty of speech, but especially because it is certain that his species does not have the faculty of perfecting itself, which is the specific characteristic of the human species—experiments which do not appear to have been made on the Pongo and the Orangutan with enough care to allow drawing the same conclusion for them. There would, however, be a means by which, if the Orangutan or others were of the human species, the crudest observers could even assure themselves of it by demonstration. But besides the fact that a single generation would not suffice for this experiment, it must pass as impracticable, because it would be necessary that what is only a supposition were shown to be true before the test that ought to verify the fact could be tried innocently.[86]

Precipitous judgments, which are not the fruit of enlightened reason, are liable to be excessive. Without ceremony our travelers take for beasts, under the names *Pongos, Mandrills, Orangutans*, the same beings that the ancients, under the names *Satyrs, Fauns, Sylvans*, took for Divinities. Perhaps, after more precise research, it will be found that they are neither animals nor gods, but men.[87] In the meantime, it seems to me that there is as much reason to defer on this subject to Merolla, an educated Monk, an eyewitness, and one who, with all his naïveté, was nonetheless a man

of wit, as to the Merchant Battel, Dapper, Purchass, and the other Compilers.

What judgment would such Observers have made about the Child found in 1694, of whom I spoke before, who gave no sign of reason, walked on his hands and feet, had no language, and formed sounds having no resemblance whatever to those of a man? It took a long time, continues the same Philosopher who provided me with this fact,[88] before he could utter a few words, and then he did it in a barbarous way. As soon as he could speak, he was questioned about his first state, but he did not remember it any more than we remember what happened to us in the Cradle. If unhappily for him, this child had fallen into the hands of our travelers, it cannot be doubted that after noting his silence and stupidity, they would have decided to send him back to the woods or lock him up in a Zoo; after which they would have spoken learnedly of him in splendid reports as a very curious Beast which looked rather like man.

For the three or four hundred years since the inhabitants of Europe have inundated the other parts of the world, and continually published new collections of voyages and reports, I am persuaded that we know no other men except the Europeans; furthermore, it appears, from the ridiculous prejudices which have not died out even among Men of Letters, that under the pompous name of the study of man everyone does hardly anything except study the men of his country. In vain do individuals come and go; it seems that Philosophy does not travel. In addition, the Philosophy of each People is but little suited for another. The cause of this is manifest, at least for distant countries; there are scarcely more than four sorts of men who make voyages of long duration: Sailors, Merchants, Soldiers, and Missionaries. Now it can hardly be expected that the first three Classes should provide good Observers; and as for those in the fourth, occupied by the sublime vocation that calls them, even if they were not subject to the same prejudices of status as are all the others, it must be believed that they would not voluntarily give themselves over to researches that appear to be pure curiosity, and which would distract them from the more important works to which they are destined. Besides, to preach the Gospel usefully, zeal alone is necessary and God gives the rest; but to study men, talents are necessary that God is not obligated to give anyone, and that are not always the lot of Saints. One does not open a book of voyages without finding descriptions of characters and morals. But one is completely amazed to see that these People who have described so many things have said only what everyone already knew, that they have known how to perceive, at the other end of the world,

only what it was up to them to notice without leaving their street; and that those true features that distinguish Nations and strike eyes made to see have almost always escaped theirs. Hence this fine adage of morality, so often repeated by the Philosophical Rabble: That men are everywhere the same; that as they have the same passions and the same vices everywhere, it is rather useless to seek to characterize different Peoples—which is about as well reasoned as if one were to say it is impossible to distinguish Peter from James, because they both have a nose, a mouth, and eyes.

Shall we never see reborn those happy times when the People did not dabble in Philosophy, but when a Plato, a Thales, a Pythagoras, seized with an ardent desire to know, undertook the greatest voyages solely to inform themselves, and went far away to shake off the yoke of National prejudices, to learn to know men by their likenesses and their differences, and to acquire that universal knowledge which is not that of one Century or one country exclusively, but which, being of all times and all places, is so to speak the common science of the wise?

One admires the lavishness of some curious People who have, at great expense, made or arranged voyages to the Orient with Learned Men and Painters, to draw pictures of ruins there and to decipher or copy Inscriptions. But I have difficulty conceiving how, in a Century taking pride in splendid knowledge, there are not to be found two closely united men—rich, one in money and the other in genius, both loving glory and aspiring to immortality—one of whom would sacrifice twenty thousand crowns of his wealth and the other ten years of his life to a celebrated voyage around the world, in order to study, not always stones and plants, but for once men and morals, and who, after so many centuries used to measure and examine the house, should finally make up their minds to want to know its inhabitants.

The Academicians who have traveled through the Northern parts of Europe and the Southern parts of America intended to visit them as Geometers rather than as Philosophers. However, being both at the same time, the regions that have been seen and described by La Condamine and Maupertuis cannot be considered as entirely unknown. The Jeweler Chardin, who traveled like Plato, left nothing to be said about Persia. China appears to have been well observed by the Jesuits. Kempfer gives a passable idea of the little he saw in Japan. With the exception of these reports, we know nothing of the Peoples of the East Indies, who have been frequented solely by Europeans more desirous to fill their purses than their heads. All of Africa and its numerous inhabitants, as distinctive in character as in color, are still to be examined; the whole earth is cov-

ered by Nations of which we know only the names—yet we dabble in judging the human race! Let us suppose a Montesquieu, Buffon, Diderot, Duclos, d'Alembert, Condillac, or men of that stamp traveling in order to inform their compatriots, observing and describing, as they know how, Turkey, Egypt, Barbary, the empire of Morocco, Guinea, the land of the Bantus, the interior of Africa and its Eastern coasts, the Malabars, Mogul, the banks of the Ganges, the Kingdoms of Siam, Pegu, and Ava, China, Tartary, and especially Japan; then, in the other Hemisphere, Mexico, Peru, Chile, the Straits of Magellan, not forgetting the Patagonias true or false, Tucuman, Paraguay if possible, Brazil; finally the Caribbean islands, Florida, and all the Savage countries: the most important voyage of all and the one that must be undertaken with the greatest care. Let us suppose that these new Hercules, back from these memorable expeditions, then at leisure wrote the natural, Moral, and Political History of what they would have seen; we ourselves would see a new world come from their pens, and we would thus learn to know our own. I say that when such Observers will affirm of a given Animal that it is a man and of another that it is a beast, they will have to be believed; but it would be too credulous to defer to crude travelers about whom one would sometimes be tempted to ask the very question that they meddle in resolving concerning other animals.[89]

*Page 27 (*9.)*: That seems totally evident to me, and I am unable to conceive whence our Philosophers can derive all the passions they impute to Natural man. With the sole exception of the Physically necessary, which Nature itself demands, all our other needs are such only by habit, having previously not been needs, or by our desires; and one does not desire that which he is not capable of knowing. From which it follows that Savage man, desiring only the things he knows and knowing only those things the possession of which is in his power or easily acquired, nothing should be so tranquil as his soul and nothing so limited as his mind.

*Page 30 (*10.)*: I find in Locke's *On Civil Government* an objection which seems to me too specious for me to be allowed to conceal it.[90]

> "The end of conjunction between Male and Female," says this philosopher, "being not barely procreation, but the continuation of the species, this conjunction ought to last, even after procreation, so long as is necessary to the nourishment and support of the young ones, till they are able to shift and provide for themselves. This rule, which the infinite wise Maker hath set to the works of his hands, we find the inferior creatures steadily and exactly obey.

In those animals which feed on grass, the Conjunction between male and female lasts no longer than the very act of copulation, because the teat of the Dam being sufficient to nourish the young till it be able to feed on grass, the male only begets, but concerns not himself for the female or young to whose subsistence he can contribute nothing. But in beasts of prey the Conjunction lasts longer, because the Dam not being able well to subsist herself and nourish her numerous offspring by her own prey alone, a more laborious as well as more dangerous way of living than by feeding on grass; the assistance of the male is altogether necessary to the maintenance of their common family, if one may use that term, which cannot subsist till they are able to prey for themselves, but by the joint care of Male and Female. The same is to be observed in all Birds (except some Domestic ones where plenty of food excuses the cock from feeding and taking care of the young brood), whose young needing food in the nest, the cock and the hen bring it to them, till the young are able to use their wing and provide for themselves.

"And herein, I think, lies the chief, if not the only, reason why the male and female in Mankind are obliged to a longer Conjunction than other creatures, viz., because the Female is capable of conceiving, and is commonly with child again and brings forth, too, a new birth, long before the former is out of a dependency for support on his parent's help, and able to shift for himself; Whereby the Father, who is obliged to take care for those he hath begot, and to undertake that care for a long time, is under an obligation to continue in conjugal Society with the same woman by whom he has had them, and to remain in that Society much longer than other creatures, whose young being able to subsist of themselves before the time of procreation returns again, the conjugal bond dissolves of itself, and they are at complete liberty, till Hymen at his usual anniversary season summons them again to choose new mates. Wherein one cannot but admire the wisdom of the Creator who, having given to man an ability to lay up for the future as well as to supply the present necessity, hath wanted and made it necessary that Society of man should be more lasting than of male and female amongst other creatures, that so their industry might be encouraged, and their interest better united, to make provision and lay up goods for their common issue, which uncertain mixture, or easy and frequent solutions of conjugal Society would mightily disturb."

The same love of truth which made me sincerely present this objection prompts me to accompany it with a few remarks, if not to resolve it, at least to clarify it.

1. I shall observe first that moral proofs do not have great force in matters of Physics, and that they serve rather to give a reason for existing facts than to prove the real existence of those facts. Now such is the kind of proof Mr. Locke uses in the passage I have just quoted; for although it may be advantageous to the human species for the union between man and woman to be permanent, it does not follow that it was thus established by Nature; otherwise it would be necessary to say that Nature also instituted Civil Society, the Arts, Commerce, and all that is claimed to be useful to men.

2. I do not know where Mr. Locke found out that among animals of prey the Society of Male and Female lasts longer than among those that live on grass, and that the former helps the latter to feed the young: for it is not observed that the Dog, Cat, Bear, or Wolf recognize their female better than the Horse, Ram, Bull, Stag, or all the other Quadrupeds recognize theirs. It seems on the contrary that if the help of the male were necessary to the female to preserve her young, it would be above all in the species that live only on grass, because the Mother needs a very long time to graze, and during that entire period she is forced to neglect her brood; whereas the prey of a female Bear or Wolf is devoured in an instant, and she has more time, without suffering from hunger, to nurse her young. This reasoning is confirmed by an observation upon the relative number of teats and young which distinguishes the carnivorous species from the frugivorous, and about which I spoke in note (*6.). If this observation is correct and general, as woman has only two teats and rarely produces more than one child at a time, there is one more strong reason to doubt that the human species is naturally Carnivorous. So it seems that in order to draw Locke's conclusion, his reasoning would have to be altogether reversed. The same distinction applied to birds is no more solid. For who can be persuaded that the union of Male and Female is more durable among Vultures and Ravens than among Turtle-doves? We have two species of domestic birds, the Duck and the Pigeon, which provide us with examples directly contrary to the system of this Author. The Pigeon, which lives only on grain, remains united with its female, and they nourish their young in common. The Duck, whose voracity is known, recognizes neither its female nor its young, and does nothing to help with their subsistence; and among Hens, a species hardly less carnivorous, it is not observed that the Rooster troubles himself in the least for the brood. And if in other species the Male shares with the Female the care of nourishing the young, it is because birds, which cannot fly at first and which the Mother cannot nurse, are less able to do without the assistance of the Father than are Quadrupeds, for which the Mother's teat suffices, at least for some time.

3. There is much uncertainty about the principal fact that serves as a basis for all of Mr. Locke's reasoning: for in order to know whether, as he claims, in the pure state of Nature the woman is ordinarily pregnant again and has another child long before the preceding one can himself provide for his needs, it would be necessary to make experiments that Mr. Locke surely did not make and that no one is able to make. The continual cohabitation of Husband and Wife provides such an immediate opportunity to be exposed to a new pregnancy that it is very hard to

believe that chance encounter or the impulsion of temperament alone produced such frequent effects in the pure state of Nature as in the state of conjugal Society—a slowness which would perhaps tend to make the children more robust, and which in addition might be compensated by a prolonged ability to conceive among women, who would have abused it less in their youth. With regard to Children, there are many reasons to believe that their strength and their organs develop later among us than they did in the primitive state of which I speak. The original weakness they derive from the constitution of their Parents, the cares taken to wrap and restrain all their limbs, the softness in which they are raised, perhaps the use of milk other than their Mother's, everything opposes and retards in them the first progress of Nature. The concentration they are obliged to give to a thousand things on which their attention is continually fixed, while no exercise is given to their bodily strength, may also bring about considerable diversion in their growth; so that if instead of first overburdening and tiring their minds in a thousand ways, their Bodies were left to be exercised by the continual movements that Nature seems to demand of them, it is to be presumed that they would much sooner be capable of walking, acting, and providing for their needs themselves.[91]

4. Finally, Mr. Locke proves at most that there could well be in a man a motive for remaining attached to a woman when she has a Child; but he does not prove at all that he must have been attached to her before the delivery and during the nine months of pregnancy. If a given woman is indifferent to the man during these nine months, if she even becomes unknown to him, why will he assist her after delivery? Why will he help her to raise a Child he does not even know belongs to him, and whose birth he neither planned nor foresaw? Mr. Locke evidently supposes what is in question; for it is not a matter of knowing why the man will remain attached to the woman after delivery, but why he will become attached to her after conception. His appetite satisfied, the man no longer needs a given woman, nor the woman a given man. The man has not the least concern nor perhaps the least idea of the consequences of his action. One goes off in one direction, the other in another, and there is no likelihood that at the end of nine months they have any memory of having known each other: for this kind of memory, by which one individual gives preference to another for the act of procreation, requires, as I prove in the text, more progress or corruption in human understanding than can be supposed in man in the state of animality in question here. Another woman can therefore satisfy the new desires of the man as conveniently as the one he has already known, and another man satisfy in the same way the woman, supposing that she is impelled by the same

appetite during pregnancy, which can reasonably be doubted. And if in the state of Nature the woman no longer feels the passion of love after the conception of the child, the obstacle to her Society with the man thereby becomes much greater still, since then she no longer needs either the man who impregnated her or any other. Therefore there is not, for the man, any reason to seek the same woman, nor for the woman, any reason to seek the same man. Locke's reasoning therefore falls apart, and all the Dialectic of this Philosopher has not saved him from the error committed by Hobbes and others. They had to explain a fact of the state of Nature, that is to say, of a state where men lived isolated and where a given man had no motive for living near another given man, nor perhaps to live near one another, which is much worse; and they did not think of carrying themselves back beyond the Centuries of Society, that is to say, of those times when men have always had a reason to live near one another, and when a given man often has a reason for living beside a given man or a given woman.[92]

*Page 30 (*b.)*: I shall refrain from launching into the philosophic reflections to be made about the advantages and inconveniences of this institution of languages: it is not for me to be permitted to attack vulgar errors, and educated People respect their prejudices too much to bear my supposed paradoxes with patience. Let us therefore let Men speak who have not been accused of a Crime for sometimes daring to take the side of reason against the opinion of the multitude.

> *Nec quidquam felicitati humani generis decederet, si pulsa tot linguarum peste et confusione, unam artem callerent mortales, et signis, motibus, gestibusque, licitum foret quidvis explicare. Nunc vero ita comparatum est, ut animalium quae vulgo bruta creduntur melior longe quam nostra hac in parte videatur conditio, ut pote quae promptius, et forsan felicius, sensus et cogitationes suas sine interprete significent, quam ulli queant mortales, praesertim si peregrino utantur sermone.* (Is. Vossius, *de Poemat. Cant. et Viribus Rythmi*, p. 66)[93]

*Page 33 (*II.)*: Plato, showing how ideas of discrete quantity and its relationships are necessary in the least of arts, with reason makes fun of the Authors of his time who claimed that Palamedes had invented numbers at the siege of Troy; as if, says this Philosopher, Agamemnon could have been ignorant until then of how many legs he had.[94] In fact, one senses the impossibility for Society and the arts to have reached the point where they already were at the time of the siege of Troy unless men had the use of numbers and arithmetic. But the need to know numbers, before acquiring other knowledge, does not make their invention easier to imagine. Once the names of the numbers are known, it is easy to explain

their meaning and evoke the ideas these names represent; but in order to invent them it was necessary, before conceiving of these same ideas, to be so to speak familiar with philosophic meditations, to be trained in considering beings by their sole essence and independently of all other perception: a very difficult, very metaphysical, very unnatural abstraction, and one without which, nonetheless, these ideas could never have been carried from one species or genus to another, nor could numbers have become universal. A Savage could consider separately his right leg and his left leg, or look at them together under the indivisible idea of a pair, without ever thinking that he had two of them; for the representative idea which depicts an object to us is one thing, and the numerical idea which determines it is another. He was even less able to count to five; and although, placing his hands on one another, he could have noticed that the fingers corresponded exactly, he was very far from thinking of their numerical equality. He did not know the sum of his fingers any more than that of his hairs; and if, after having made him understand what numbers are, someone said to him that he had as many toes as fingers, he would perhaps have been very surprised, in comparing them, to find it was true.

*Page 36 (*12.)*: Amour-propre and love of oneself, two passions very different in their Nature and their effects, must not be confused. Love of oneself is a natural sentiment which inclines every animal to watch over its own preservation, and which, directed in man by reason and modified by pity, produces humanity and virtue. Amour-propre is only a relative sentiment, artificial and born in Society, which inclines each individual to have a greater esteem for himself than for anyone else, inspires in men all the harm they do to one another, and is the true source of honor.

This being well understood, I say that in our primitive state, in the genuine state of Nature, amour-propre does not exist; for each particular man regarding himself as the sole Spectator to observe him, as the sole being in the universe to take an interest in him, and as the sole judge of his own merit, it is not possible that a sentiment having its source in comparisons he is not capable of making could spring up in his soul. For the same reason this man could have neither hate nor desire for revenge, passions that can arise only from the opinion that some offense has been received; and as it is scorn or intention to hurt and not the harm that constitutes the offense, men who know neither how to evaluate themselves nor compare themselves can do each other a great deal of mutual violence when they derive some advantage from it, without ever offending one another. In a word, every man, seeing his fellows hardly other-

wise than he would see Animals of another species, can carry off the prey of the weaker or relinquish his own to the stronger, without considering these plunderings as anything but natural events, without the slightest emotion of insolence or spite, and with no other passion than the sadness or joy of a good or bad outcome.

*Page 48 (*13.)*: It is an extremely remarkable thing, for all the years that Europeans have been tormenting themselves to bring the Savages of various countries in the world to their way of life, that they have not yet been able to win over a single one, not even with the aid of Christianity; for our missionaries sometimes make Christians of them, but never Civilized men. Nothing can overcome the invincible repugnance they have against adopting our morals and living in our way. If these poor Savages are as unhappy as it is claimed they are, by what inconceivable depravity of judgment do they constantly refuse to Civilize themselves by imitating us or to learn to live happily among us; whereas one reads in a thousand places that Frenchmen and other Europeans have voluntarily taken refuge among these Nations, spent their entire lives there, no longer able to leave such a strange way of life; and whereas one sees even sensible Missionaries touchingly regret the calm and innocent days they have spent among such greatly scorned Peoples? If one answers that they do not have enough intellect to judge soundly about their state and ours, I shall reply that the estimation of happiness is less the concern of reason than of sentiment. Besides, this reply can be turned against us with even more force; for there is a greater distance between our ideas and the mental disposition necessary in order to conceive of the taste that Savages find for their way of life than between the ideas of Savages and those that can allow them to conceive of our way of life. In fact, after several observations it is easy for them to see that all our labors are directed toward only two objects: namely, the commodities of life for oneself, and consideration among others. But how are we to imagine the kind of pleasure a Savage takes in spending his life alone in the middle of the woods, or fishing, or blowing into a bad flute, without ever knowing how to get a single tone from it and without troubling himself to learn?

Several times Savages have been brought to Paris, London, and other cities; men have hurried to show off our luxury, our wealth, and all our most useful and curious arts; all this has never aroused in them anything except stupid admiration, without the slightest emotion of covetousness. I recall among others the Story of a Chief of some North Americans who was brought to the Court of England some thirty years ago. A thousand

things were put before his eyes to try to give him some present that could please him, but nothing could be found about which he seemed to care. Our weapons seemed heavy and inconvenient to him; our shoes hurt his feet, our clothes confined him, he refused everything; finally someone observed that having taken a woolen blanket, he seemed to take pleasure in wrapping it around his shoulders. You will at least agree, someone promptly said to him, about the usefulness of this article? Yes, he replied, it seems to me almost as good as an animal skin. And he would not even have said that if he had worn them both in the rain.

Perhaps, someone will say to me, it is habit which, by attaching everyone to his way of life, prevents Savages from sensing what is good in ours. And on that basis it must at least appear very extraordinary that habit has more strength in maintaining the Savages' taste for their misery than in maintaining Europeans in the enjoyment of their felicity. But to reply to this last objection with an answer to which there is not a word of rejoinder—without citing all the young Savages whom men have tried in vain to Civilize, without speaking of the Greenlanders and inhabitants of Iceland, whom men tried to raise and feed in Denmark and all of whom sadness and despair caused to perish, either from languor or in the sea when they tried to swim back to their country—I shall be content to cite a single, well-authenticated example, which I offer for the examination of admirers of European Civilization.

> "All the efforts of the Dutch Missionaries at the Cape of Good Hope have never been Able to convert a single Hottentot. Van der Stel, governor of the Cape, having taken one from infancy, had him raised in the principles of the Christian Religion and in the practice of European customs. He was richly dressed, he was taught several languages, and his progress corresponded very well to the cares taken for his education. The Governor, placing great hopes in his intelligence, sent him to the Indies with a General Commissioner who employed him usefully in the affairs of the Company. He returned to the Cape after the death of the Commissioner. A few days after his return, during a visit he paid to some of his Hottentot relatives, he made the decision to divest himself of his European finery in order to clothe himself in a Sheepskin. He returned to the Fort in this new garb, carrying a package which contained his old clothes; and presenting them to the Governor, he made this speech: * *Be so kind, Sir, as to understand that I renounce this paraphernalia forever; I renounce also for my entire life the Christian Religion; my resolution is to live and die in the Religion, ways, and customs of my Ancestors. The sole favor I ask of you is to let me keep the Necklace and Cutlass I am wearing; I shall keep them for love of you.* Immediately, without awaiting Van der Stel's reply, he escaped by running away, and he was never seen again at the Cape." *Histoire des voyages*, volume 5, page 175.[96]
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> * See the frontispiece.[95]

*Page 52 (*c.)*: One could object that, in such a disorder, men, instead of stubbornly murdering one another, would have dispersed if there had been no limits to their dispersion. But first, these limits would at least have been those of the world; and if one thinks of the excessive population which results from the state of Nature, he will judge that it would not have been long before the earth, in that state, was covered with men, thus forced to remain together. Besides, they would have dispersed if the evil had been rapid, and had it been a change occurring overnight. But they were born under the yoke; they were in the habit of bearing it when they felt its weight, and they were content to wait for the opportunity to shake it off. Finally, as they were already accustomed to a thousand commodities which forced them to remain together, dispersion was no longer so easy as in the first ages, when no one having need of anyone but himself, everyone made his decision without waiting for the consent of another.

*Page 54 (*14.)*: Marshal de Villars related that, in one of his Campaigns, the excessive knavery of a Food Agent having made the army suffer and complain, he berated him severely and threatened to have him hanged. This threat does not bother me, the knave boldly answered him, and I am very happy to tell you that a man who has a hundred thousand crowns at his disposal does not get hanged. I do not know how it happened, the Marshal added naively, but in fact he was not hanged, although he had deserved it a hundred times.

*Page 63 (*15.)*: Distributive justice would still be opposed to this rigorous equality of the state of Nature, even if it were practicable in Civil Society; and as all the members of the State owe it services proportionate to their talents and strengths, the Citizens in their turn ought to be distinguished and favored in proportion to their services. It is in this sense that a passage of Isocrates must be understood, in which he praises the first Athenians for having well known how to distinguish which was the most advantageous of the two sorts of equality, one of which consists in dividing the same advantages among all Citizens indifferently, and the other in distributing them according to each man's merit. These skillful politicians, adds the orator, banishing that unjust equality which establishes no difference between evil and good men, adhered inviolably to that which rewards and punishes everyone according to his merit.[97] But first, no Society has ever existed, no matter what degree of corruption societies might have reached, in which no difference between evil and good men was established; and in matters of morals—where the Law

cannot establish an exact enough measurement to serve as a rule for the Magistrate—the law very wisely, in order not to leave the fate or rank of Citizens at his discretion, forbids him the judgment of persons, leaving him only that of Actions. Only morals as pure as those of the Ancient Romans can bear Censors; such tribunals would soon have overthrown everything among us. It is up to public esteem to establish the difference between evil and good men. The Magistrate is judge only of rigorous right; but the People are the genuine judges of morals: an upright and even enlightened judge on this point, sometimes deceived but never corrupted. The ranks of Citizens therefore ought to be regulated not upon their personal merit, which would be leaving to the Magistrates the means of making an almost arbitrary application of the Law, but upon the real services that they render to the State, which are susceptible of a more exact estimation.[98]

Three Fragments from Early Versions of the Discourse on Inequality

I. Fragment of a Rough Draft of the *Discourse on Inequality*—Geneva Manuscript

By dint of new combinations, by dint of habituation at looking and reflecting, human reason finally attained the degree of perfection of which it was susceptible, and having reached its limits it sought to break through them, and departing almost from among the beasts man soon wanted to raise himself above the Angels.[1] No sooner had he discovered those sublime truths which are the true foundations of justice and virtue, and the knowledge of which makes up his genuine greatness, than he claimed to penetrate mysteries that are beyond his intelligence,[2] [and] accustoming himself to [judging things without knowing them] he fell from errors to errors in the most shameful aberrations. I will not stop to show how many follies and crimes this proud curiosity engendered, how many idols it erected and fanatics it inspired, I will be content with remarking that it produced a new sort of inequality which, without being established by nature or even by convention but only by chimerical opinions, was at the same time the least reasonable and the most dangerous of all. It bred a species of singular men who—presenting themselves as Interpreters of incomprehensible things—claimed to subject all other people to their decisions. Skillfully substituting their absurd and self-interested maxims for those of right reason, they imperceptibly distracted peoples from the duties of humanity and the rules of morality, which they did not dispose of at their whim, and subjected them to indifferent or criminal practices of which they alone were the dispensers and judges.

Mortal enemies of the Laws and their ministers, always ready to authorize the unjust usurpations of the supreme magistrate in order to usurp legitimate authority more easily themselves, by always speaking about purely spiritual rights, they acted so well that the goods, the life, and the liberty of the citizens were in safety only as long as they put themselves at their discretion; their power was all the more redoubtable since—boldly setting themselves up as the sole judges in their own case and not tolerating any common measure of the differences which they

put between themselves and other men—they overthrew and annihilated all human rights without anyone ever being able to prove to them that they were exceeding their own. Finally, judging things only by their natural course, if heaven itself had not spoken, if the voice of God had not taught men about the genuine Religion they had to follow, if his word had not fixed by means of revelation the sacred limits of the two powers, one does not know to what point idolatrous and ambitious Priests—dominating over peoples by means of superstition and over the magistrates by means of terror—might not have carried their offenses and the miseries of the human race.

One feels at least how much—until the supernatural foundation of genuine religion—such men, favoring the magistrate's enterprises in order to facilitate their own in order to render him odious and prepare peoples to see them one day without a murmur lay hold of the power which he abuses.[3]

It was these dangerous men who first excited the magistrate to extend his rights in order to find them better established when the time would come to lay hold of them themselves, to impose upon him in order to render him odious to the peoples and make them bear it more easily that one day he might be stripped of them by themselves, it was they who sometimes also brought the people to rebellion in order to make a trial of their power, in order to make themselves feared by the chiefs, to accustom them to their arbitration and to prepare from afar the revolutions by which they ought one day [. . .]

to believe without conceiving and to judge without knowing and seeking in the chimeras of one's imagination for remedies for ills that do not have any and for resources against the weakness of one's nature; from this issued magic, divination, illusions, astrology and the other supernatural reveries which form the shame of reason, the admiration of imbeciles and the triumph of cheats [. . .]

and from arbitrary penalties and recompenses for [. . .]

II. Fragment of an Intermediate Version of the *Discourse on Inequality*—Neuchâtel Manuscript

fell from errors to errors in the most shameful aberrations.[4] From this issued astrology, the illusions of the divinatory art, Magic, and other so-called supernatural reveries which form the shame of reason, the refuge of discontented imbeciles, and the triumph of cheats; I will not stop to show how many follies and crimes this proud curiosity engendered, how many idols it erected and fanatics it inspired: I will be content with re-

marking that it produced a new sort of ineqality which, without being established by Nature nor even by convention but only by chimerical opinions, was at the same time the least reasonable and the most dangerous of all. It bred a species of singular men who—presenting themselves as interpreters of incomprehensible things and as Ministers of the divinity without its order, and without its avowal—claimed to subject the Human Race to their decisions. Skillfully substituting Gods of their making for the genuine one who did not suit their intentions, and their absurd and self-interested maxims for those of right reason, they imperceptibly distracted Peoples from the duties of humanity and the rules of morality which they did not dispose of at their whim, in order to subject them to indifferent or criminal practices, and to arbitrary punishments and recompenses of which they alone were the dispensers and judges. Mortal enemies of the Laws and their ministers, always ready to authorize the unjust usurpations of the supreme magistrate in order to usurp his legitimate authority more easily themselves, by always speaking about purely spiritual rights, they acted so that the goods, the life and the liberty of the Citizen were in safety only as long as he put himself at their discretion; their power was all the more redoubtable since—shamelessly setting themselves up as the sole judges in their own case, and not tolerating any common measure of the differences which they put between themselves and other men—they overthrew and annihilated all human rights without anyone ever being able to prove to them that they were exceeding their own. Finally, judging things only by their natural course, if Heaven itself had not spoken, if the voice of God had not taught men about the Religion they had to follow, if his word had not fixed by means of Revelation the sacred limits of the two powers, one does not know to what point idolatrous and ambitious Priests—dominating over peoples by means of superstition and over the Leaders by means of terror—might not have carried their offenses and the miseries of the human Race: but this is enough to stop me on this particular cause, while I have so many others left to develop.

Let us recall to what point the spirit of society attracts and changes our natural inclinations. Savage man and civilized man differ so much in this regard that the state that constitutes the supreme happiness of one would reduce the other to despair. While the savage breathes only repose and freedom, wants only to live and remain idle, and even the perfect quietude of the Stoic does not approach his profound indifference for all other objects, the Citizen always active, sweats, agitates himself, torments himself incessantly in order to seek still more laborious occupations: he works to death, he even rushes to it sometimes in order to get

in condition to live, or renounces life in order to acquire immortality, he pays court to the Great and to the Rich, he spares nothing in order to obtain the glory of serving them; he proudly boasts of their protection, and proud of his Slavery, he speaks with disdain of those who do not have the honor of sharing it. What a sight the difficult and envied labor of a European Minister are for a Carib! How many cruel deaths would that indolent savage not prefer to the horror of such a life which often is not even sweetened by the pleasure of doing good. But in order to see the goal of so many cares the words, power and reputation would have to have a meaning in the savage's mind; he would have to learn that there are men in the world who set some store by the consideration of the rest of the universe, and who know how to be happy and content with themselves on the testimony of others rather than their own. Such is in fact the true principle of all these differences: The savage lives within himself; the sociable man, always outside of himself, knows how to live only in the opinion of others, and it is so to speak from their judgment alone that he draws the sentiment of his own existence. It is not part of my subject to show how from such a disposition so much indifference for good and evil arises along with such fine discourses on morality; how everything being reduced to appearances, everything becomes factitious and deceptive, honor, friendship, virtue; often even vices themselves; how, in a word, always asking others what we are and never daring to question ourselves on this subject, in the midst of so much Philosophy, politeness, and sublime maxims, we have only a deceitful and frivolous exterior, without soul, without principles, without pity, and without humanity. It is sufficient for me to have made it seen evidently that this is not the original state of man, and that it is the spirit of society alone and the inequality it necessarily engenders which thus change and alter our natural inclinations.

III. Fragment of an Intermediate Version of the *Discourse on Inequality*—Paris Manuscript[5]

at first only the Officers, to call their Fellow Citizens their slaves, count them like Cattle in the number of things that belonged to them, and to call themselves equals of the Gods and Kings of Kings.[6]

If we follow the progress of inequality in these different revolutions, we shall find that the establishment of the Law and of the right of property was its first stage, the institution of the Magistracy the second, and the third and last was the changing of legitimate power into arbitrary power, so that the status of rich and poor was authorized by the first

epoch, that of powerful and weak by the second; and by the third that of Master and Slave which is the last degree of inequality, and the limit to which all the others finally lead, until new revolutions dissolve the Government altogether, or bring it closer to its legitimate institution.

To understand the necessity of this progress, one must consider less the motives for the establishment of the Body politic than the form it takes in its execution, and the inevitable abuses it brings along with it. What is better than laws for subjecting all private individuals to the same mutual duties, and for defending the weak against the violence of the ambitious? But who does not see with what ease the latter—taking advantage of the very precautions that one takes against them—profit from all the favor of the Laws whose authority they defy, and make use of them in crushing the weak in order to deprive them of the right to defend themselves? What is more useful than equitable and attentive Magistrates who watch out for the safety of the citizens, and protect them against oppression? But how to prevent these magistrates from becoming oppressors themselves, and from abusing the power one entrusts to them, perhaps more than those they prevent from usurping it would abuse it?—Quis custodiet ipsos custodes. Juven. *Sat.* 6.[7] What finally is more necessary to the State then an intrepid and prudent Leader, always prompt to penetrate the plans of suspect neighbors, and to have his way with the declared enemy? But if, preferring his interest to ours, this Leader is tempted to oppress us himself while always speaking about defending us, who will protect the State against its Protector when he becomes its Tyrant, and what will we have gained but an additional enemy, whom we will not even be permitted to resist? Is it not, says the wise Locke, as if, in order to protect a Barnyard from a fox, one put it under the protection of a Wolf?[8] In vain will the Nation bind its leaders by useless capitulations or by those always violated oaths which serve only to make perjurers and with which the magistrate amuses Peoples, as one amuses Children with false promises without any intention of keeping them: in vain does it reserve for itself the right of watching over their conduct in its assemblies; sooner or later they will prevent it from assembling or will find the art of buying the Citizen they will not be able to frighten, of intimidating the one they will not be able to corrupt, and of making perish the one they will not be able either to corrupt or intimidate. As soon as it will no longer be permitted to meet, it will be easy to make the just indignation of a People that claims back its liberty pass for the seditious rumbling of a band of mutineers. Every man who loves his Country will be treated as a rebellious subject, and it will become more dangerous to claim back the Laws than to transgress them. In a word,

the vices that make Political Establishments necessary are the same ones that make their abuse inevitable; and as—excepting Sparta alone, where the Law attended principally to the education of Children—Laws in general less strong than morals contain men without changing them it would be easy to prove that a Government that, without being corrupted or altered, always worked exactly according to the ends of its institution, would have been instituted unnecessarily and that a Country where no one eluded the Laws and abused the Magistracy would need neither Magistrate nor Laws.

Concern for public safety, and the necesseary strength to repulse an unjust and ambitious aggressor, was yet another sort of abuse no less dangerous and no less inevitable. As long as the Magistrates made common cause with the People, as long as the Leader and the Nation had only the same interest, the State had no need of other defenders than the inhabitants of the Country; each fighting for his hearth, and for his altar, there was as many soldiers as Citizens, was was a duty for all, without being a profession for anyone; The troops [. . .]

Letter from Voltaire[1] *to Rousseau*

August 30, 1755[2]
From Les Delices near Geneva[3]

I have received, Sir, your new book against the human race; I thank you for it. You will please men to whom you tell their own truths, and you will not correct them. You paint with very true colors the horrors of human society from which ignorance and weakness anticipate so many comforts. Never has so much intelligence been used in seeking to make us stupid.[4]

One acquires the desire to walk on all fours when one reads your work. Nevertheless, since I lost this habit more than sixty years ago, I unfortunately feel that it is impossible for me to take it up again. And I leave that natural gait to those who are more worthy of it than you and I. I also cannot embark to go to find the savages of Canada, first because the illnesses to which I am condemned make a doctor from Europe necessary to me, second because the war has been carried into that country, and the examples of our nations have made the savages almost as wicked as we are. I limit myself to being a peaceful savage in the solitude that I have chosen near your fatherland where you ought to be.

I admit with you that literature and the sciences have sometimes caused much harm.

The enemies of Tasso[5] made his life a web of misfortunes, those of Galileo made him moan in prisons at seventy years of age for having known the motion of the earth, and what is still more shameful is that they obliged him to retract.

As soon as our[6] friends began the encyclopedic Dictionary,[7] those who dared to be their rivals called them deists, atheists, and even Jansenists.[8] If I dared to count myself among those whose labors have had only persecution as recompense, I would make you see a troop of wretches desperate to ruin me from the day I presented the tragedy of Oedipus[9], a library full of ridiculous calumnies printed against me, an ex-Jesuit priest whom I had saved from the death penalty[10] repaying me with defamatory libels for the service I had rendered him; an even guiltier man having my own work, *The Age of Louis XIV* printed with notes in which

the crassest ignorance reeled off the most brazen impostures, another who sells to a book-seller a so-called universal history under my name, and the book-seller greedy enough, and foolish enough, to print this shapeless fabric of blunders, false dates, facts, and mangled names; and finally men craven enough and wicked enough to impute this rhapsody to me.[11] I would make you see society infected with this new sort of men unknown to all antiquity who, not being able to embrace a decent profession either as a lackey or laborer and unfortunately knowing how to read and write, make themselves literary brokers, steal manuscripts, disfigure them, and sell them. I could complain that a pleasantry written more than thirty years ago on the same subject that Chapelain had the stupidity to treat seriously,[12] today circulates the world because of the unfaithfulness and infamous avarice of those wretches who have disfigured it with as much foolishness as malice, and who, after thirty years, everywhere sell this work which is certainly no longer mine and which has become theirs.[13] I would add lastly that they dared to rummage through the most respectable archives and to steal from them a portion of the memoirs that I had put there as a deposit when I was historiographer of France, and they sold to a book-seller in Paris the fruit of my labors.[14] I would depict for you ingratitude, imposture, and rapine pursuing me to the foot of the Alps and to the edge of my tomb.

But, Sir, admit also that these thorns attached to literature and reputation are only flowers in comparison to the other ills which have inundated the earth at all times. Admit that neither Cicero, nor Lucretius, nor Virgil, nor Horace were the authors of the proscriptions of Marius, of Sylla, of that debauched Antony, of that imbecile Lepidus, of that tyrant without courage Octavius Caepias so cravenly surnamed Augustus.[15]

Admit that the banter of Marot did not produce the Saint Bartholemew's Day Massacre,[16] and the tragedy of the *Cid* did not cause the wars of the Fronde.[17] Great crimes have been committed only by famous ignoramuses. What makes and what will always make this world a vale of tears is the insatiable cupidity and indomitable pride of men, from Thamas Couli Can[18] who did not know how to read to a customs clerk who knows only how to calculate. Letters nourish the soul, set it right, console it; and they even make your glory when you write against them. You are like Achilles who gets carried away against glory, and like Father Malebranche whose brilliant imagination wrote against the imagination.[19]

Monsieur Chapui[20] informs me that your health is very bad. You must

come to restore it in your native air, enjoy freedom, drink the milk of our cows with me, and graze on our grass. I am very philosophically and with the most tender esteem, Sir,

Your very humble and very obedient servant.

VOLTAIRE

Letter from Rousseau to Voltaire

Paris, September 10, 1755

It is I who must thank you, Sir, in all respects. In offering you the outline of my sad reveries, I did not believe I was giving you a present worthy of you, but that I was fulfilling a duty and paying you an homage we all owe you as our leader. Sensitive, in addition, of the honor you confer on my fatherland, I share the gratitude of my Fellow Citizens, and hope it will only increase when they have profited from the teachings you can give them. Embellish the sanctuary you have chosen. Enlighten a People worthy of your lessons. And you who know how to portray virtues and freedom so well, teach us to cherish them within our walls as we do in your Writings. All that comes near you ought to learn from you the path to glory.[1]

You see that I do not aspire to reestablish us in our stupidity,[2] although for myself I greatly regret the little bit of mine that I have lost. With respect to you, Sir, such a return would be a miracle both so great and so harmful that only God could do it and only the Devil could wish it. So do not try to go back to walking on all fours. No one in the world would succeed less than you at it. You stand us all up too well on our own two feet to stop standing up on yours.

I agree about all the disfavor that pursues men famous in letters. I even agree about all the ills linked to Humanity, which seem independent of our vain knowledge. Men have brought upon themselves so many sources of wretchedness that when chance removes one, they are scarcely less beset. Besides, there are hidden connections in the progress of things which the common person doesn't perceive, but which will not escape the wise man's eye if he would think about it. It isn't Terence, or Cicero, or Virgil, or Seneca, or Tacitus; it isn't either learned men or Poets who produced the misfortunes of Rome and the crimes of the Romans. But without the slow and secret poison that little by little corrupted the most vigorous government that history has ever recorded, neither Cicero nor Lucretius nor Sallust would have existed or written. The lovable century of Lelius and Terence led from afar to the brilliant century of Augustus and Horace, and eventually to the horrible centuries of Seneca and Nero, Domitian and Martial. The taste for Letters and the Arts in a People is

born from an internal vice which it enlarges. And if it is true that all human progress is pernicious for the species, the progress of the mind and of knowledge that enlarges our pride and multiplies our errors soon hastens our misfortunes. But a time comes when the evil is such that the very causes that gave birth to it are necessary to prevent it from becoming larger. It is the sword that must be left in the wound for fear that the wounded person will die when it is removed. For myself, if I had pursued my first vocation and had neither read nor written, I would doubtless have been happier. However, if letters were abolished now, I would be deprived of the only pleasure remaining to me. It is in their bosom that I console myself for all my ills. It is among those who cultivate them that I taste the sweetness of friendship and learn to enjoy life without fearing death. I owe them the little that I am. I owe them even the honor of being known by you. But let us consult interest in our business affairs and truth in our writings. Although Philosophers, Historians, and Learned men are needed to enlighten the World and lead its blind inhabitants, if wise Memnon told me the truth, I know nothing so crazy as a People of wise men.[3]

Let us agree, Sir: if it is good that great Geniuses teach men, it is necessary that the common people receive their teachings. If everyone gets involved in giving them, who will want to receive them? Montaigne says that the lame are ill-suited to bodily exercise, and those with lame souls to mental exercise.[4]

But in this learned century, we see only the lame wishing to teach others to walk. The people receive the Writings of the wise in order to judge them and not to learn. Never have there been so many Dandins.[5] The Theater crawls with them, the cafes echo with their pronouncements. They air them in newspapers, the Quais are covered with their Writings, and I hear the Orphan* criticized, because it is applauded, by a scribbler so incapable of seeing its faults that he can scarcely feel its beauties.

Let us seek the first source of society's disorders, and we will find that all of men's ills come far more from error than ignorance, and that what we do not know at all harms us far less than what we believe we know. Now what method is more certain to rush from mistake to mistake than the frenzy to know everything? If people had not claimed to know that the earth does not turn, Galileo would not have been punished for saying that it did. If only Philosophers had claimed that title, the Encyclopedia would not have had any persecutors. If a hundred Myrmidons did not

* A tragedy by Voltaire that was playing at that time.

aspire to glory, you would enjoy yours in peace, or at least you would have only rivals worthy of you.

Therefore, do not be surprised to feel some thorns inseparable from the flowers that crown great talents. The insults of your enemies are the satirical acclaim that follows the cortege of the Triumphant. It is the public's eagerness for all your Writings that produces the thefts of which you complain. But adulterations are not easy, for neither iron nor lead is easily mixed with gold. Allow me to say this because of my interest in your peace and our education. Scorn vain rumors whose intention is less to harm you than to distract you from doing good. The more you are criticized, the more you should make yourself admired. A good book is a devastating reply to printed insults. And who will dare attribute to you Writings you did not write as long as you are writing only inimitable ones?

I am grateful for your invitation. And if this winter leaves me well enough to go and live in my Fatherland in the spring, I will profit from your kindnesses. But I would prefer to drink water from your fountain than milk from your cows, and as for the grasses in your pasture, I fear that I shall find none other than the Lotus, which is not the fodder of Beasts, and the Moly, which prevents men from becoming beasts.[6]

I am with all my heart and with respect, etc.

Letter from J. J. Rousseau to Mr. de Voltaire

August 18, 1756

Your last Poems, Sir, have reached me in my solitude[1]; and although all my friends know the love I have for your writings, I do not know from which side these could have come to me, unless it be from your own. I found pleasure in them along with instruction, and have recognized the hand of the master; and I believe I owe you thanks for the copy as well as for the work. I shall not tell you that everything in them appears equally good to me; but things in them that displease me only impose more confidence on me for those which carry me away. It is not without difficulty that I sometimes defend my reason against the charms of your Poetry; but in order to render my admiration more worthy of your works I force myself not to admire everything in them.

I shall do more, sir; I shall tell you without evasion, not the beauties that I believed I felt in these two poems, the task would unnerve my laziness, nor even the defects that will be noticed in them by abler people than I, but the displeasures which disturb the taste that I take to your lessons in this instance; and I shall tell them to you still softened by a first reading in which my heart listened avidly to yours, loving you as my brother, honoring you as my Master, flattering myself at last that you will recognize in my intentions the frankness of an upright soul, and in my speech the tone of a friend of the truth who speaks to a Philosopher. Besides, the more your second poem enchants me, the more freely I side against the first; for if you have not been afraid to oppose yourself, why should I be afraid to be of your opinion? I ought to believe that you are little beholden to sentiments that you refute so well.

All my grievances are then against your poem on the disaster of Lisbon, because I expected from it some results more worthy of the humanity which appears to have inspired you to write it. You reproach Pope and Leibniz for condemning our misfortunes, in maintaining that everything[2] is good[3], and you so amplify the picture of our miseries that you aggravate the feeling of them: instead of the consolations for which I hoped, you only cause me to be afflicted. One might say that you fear that I do not see well enough how unfortunate I am; and it seems you expect to placate me a good deal by proving to me that everything is bad.

Do not deceive yourself on this, Sir; it happens entirely to the contrary of what you maintain. This optimism that you find so cruel, nevertheless consoles me in the very miseries that you depict to me as intolerable.

Pope's poem sweetens my troubles and leads me to patience; yours embitters my pains, invites me to grumbling, and depriving me of everything beyond a troubled hope, it reduces me to despair. In this strange tension which reigns between what you establish and what I experience, calm the perplexity which agitates me, and tell me, which is abused, feeling or reason? "Man, have patience," Pope and Leibniz tell me. "Your ills are a necessary consequence of your nature, and of the constitution of this universe. The eternal and beneficent Being who governs you would have liked to safeguard you from them. Of all the economies possible, he has chosen the one which combined the least bad with the most good, or (to say the same thing more bluntly, if it is necessary) if he has not done better, it is that he could not do better."

What does your poem now tell me? "Suffer forever, wretches. If there is a God who has created you, no doubt he is omnipotent; he could have prevented all your ills: do not hope then that they will ever end; for one would not know how to see why you exist, if it is not to suffer and die."[4] I do not know what such a doctrine could possess that is more consoling than optimism and even fatalism. As for me, I acknowledge it appears to me even crueler than Manichaeism. If perplexity concerning the origin of evil forces you to alter one of the perfections of God, why do you wish to justify his power at the expense of his goodness? If it is necessary to choose between two errors, I like the first one even better.

You do not wish, Sir, that your work be regarded as a poem against Providence; and I shall indeed restrain myself from giving it this name, although you have characterized as a book against the human race a writing wherein I pleaded the cause of the human race against itself.[5] I know the distinction that must be made between an author's intentions, and the consequences that can be drawn from his doctrine. The just defense of myself obliges me only to have you observe, that in depicting human miseries, my purpose was excusable, and even praiseworthy, as I believe, for I showed men how they caused their miseries themselves, and consequently how they might avoid them.

I do not see that one can seek the source of moral evil other than in man free, perfected, thereby corrupted; and as for physical ills, if sensitive and impassive matter is a contradiction, as it seems to me, they are inevitable in any system of which man is a part; and then the question is not at all why is man not perfectly happy, but why does he exist? Moreover I believe I have shown that with the exception of death, which is an evil

almost solely because of the preparations which one makes preceding it, most of our physical ills are still our own work.[6] Without departing from your subject of Lisbon, admit, for example, that nature did not construct twenty thousand houses of six to seven stories there, and that if the inhabitants of this great city had been more equally spread out and more lightly lodged, the damage would have been much less, and perhaps of no account. All of them would have fled at the first disturbance, and the next day they would have been seen twenty leagues from there, as gay as if nothing had happened; but it is necessary to remain, to be obstinate about some hovels, to expose oneself to new quakes, because what is left behind is worth more than what can be brought along. How many unfortunate people have perished in this disaster because of one wanting to take his clothes, another his papers, another his money? Is it not known that the person of each man has become the least part of himself, and that it is almost not worth the trouble of saving it when one has lost all the rest?

You would have wished (and who would not have wished the same) that the quake had occurred in the middle of a wilderness rather than in Lisbon. Can one doubt that such also do take place in the wildernesses? But we do not speak of them, because they do not cause any harm to the Gentlemen of the Cities, the only men of whom we take account; they even cause little harm to the animals and Savages who dwell scattered in isolated places, and who fear neither the fall of housetops, nor the conflagration of houses. But what does such a privilege signify? Should it be said then that the order of the world ought to change according to our whims, that nature ought to be subjugated to our laws, and that in order to interdict an earthquake in some place, we have only to build a City there?

There are some events which often strike us more or less according to the perspective under which one considers them, and which lose much of the horror that they inspire at first glance, when one wants to examine them more closely. I have learned in *Zadig*, and nature confirms for me daily, that an early death is not always a real evil, and that it can sometimes pass for a relative good.[7] Of so many men crushed under the ruins of Lisbon, several, undoubtedly, have evaded some greater misfortunes; and, despite everything touching in such a description, and however much it furnishes to poetry, it is not certain, that a single one of these unfortunates has suffered more than if, in accordance with the ordinary course of things, he had awaited in drawn out anguish the death which overtook him by surprise. Is there a sadder end than that of a dying man burdened with useless cares, whose solicitor and heirs do not permit him

to breathe, whose Physicians leisurely assassinate him in his bed, and whose barbarous Priests artfully cause to savor death?[8] As for me, I see everywhere that the ills to which nature subjects us are far less cruel than those we add to them.

But, however ingenious we may be in stirring up our misfortunes by dint of fine institutions, we have not been able, up to the present, to perfect ourselves to the point of generally rendering life a burden to ourselves and to prefer nothingness to our existence; without which preference, discouragement, and despair would soon take hold of the greatest number, and the human race could not long subsist. But if it is better for us to be than not to be, this would be enough to justify our existence, even though we would have no compensation to expect for the ills that we have to suffer, and though these ills were as great as you depict them. But on this subject it is difficult to find any good faith among men, and any good calculations among Philosophers; because the latter in comparing what is good and bad always forget the sweet feeling of existence, independent of any other sensation, and because the vanity of despising death moves others to calumny life; almost like these women who, with a stained dress and some scissors claim to prefer holes to stains.

You think along with Erasmus that few people would want to be reborn in the same conditions in which they have lived;[9] but such a one estimates his merchandise quite highly who greatly reduces it, if he has thereby some hope of concluding the sale. Besides, Sir, whom should I believe that you have consulted on that. Some rich people, perhaps, sated by false pleasures, but ignorant of genuine ones, always bored with life and always trembling over losing it; perhaps some literary people, of all the orders of men the most sedentary, the most unhealthy, the most reflective, and consequently the most unhappy. Do you want to find some men of better composition, or at least commonly more sincere, and who, forming the greatest number, at least because of that ought to be heard by preference? Consult an honest *bourgeois* who will have spent an obscure and tranquil life without projects and without ambition; a good artisan, who lives commodiously by his trade; even a peasant, not from France, where it is claimed that it is necessary to cause them to die of misery, in order for them to enable us to live, but of the country, for example, where you are, and generally of any free country.[10] In fact I dare to state that perhaps there is in the upper Valais not a single Mountaineer discontented with his almost automatic life, and who would not willingly accept, even in place of Paradise, the bargain of being reborn unceasingly in order to vegetate thus in perpetuity. These differences cause me to believe that it is often the abuse we make of life which renders it a burden

to us; and I have a far less favorable opinion of those who are vexed at having lived than of those who can say with Cato: *Nec me vixisse poenitet, quoniam ita vixi, ut frustra me natum non existimem.*[11] This does not mean that the Wise man might not depart voluntarily without a murmur and without despair, when nature or fortune very clearly brings him the order for departure. But, according to the ordinary course of things, of whatever ills might be spread over human life, it is all things considered not a bad present; and if it is not always bad to die, it is quite rarely so to live.

Our different manners of thinking on all these matters teach me why several of your proofs are so little conclusive for me. For I am not unaware how much more readily human reason grasps the mold of our opinions than that of the truth, and that between two men of contrary opinion, what the one believes demonstrated is often only a sophism for the other. When you attack, for example, the chain of beings so well described by Pope, you say that it is not true that, if one removed an atom from the world, the world could not subsist.[12] You cite thereon Mr. de Crouzas; then you add that nature is not subject to any precise measure nor to any precise form; that no planet is moved in an absolutely regular orbit; that no known being is of a precisely mathematical form; that no precise quantity is required for any operation; that nature never acts strictly; that therefore one has no reason to assert that one atom less on Earth would be the cause of the Earth's destruction. I admit to you that concerning all this, Sir, I am more struck by the force of your assertion than by that of your reasoning, and that on this occasion, I would surrender more confidently to your authority than to your proofs.

With respect to Mr. de Crouzas, I have not read his writing against Pope, and perhaps I am in no position to understand it; but what is very certain is that I shall not grant to him what I shall have disputed with you, and that I have quite as little faith in his proofs as in his authority. Far from thinking that nature is not subject to the precision of quantities and of forms, I believe quite to the contrary that she alone strictly follows this precision, because she alone knows how to compare exactly the ends and the means, and to measure the force of the resistance. As for these pretended irregularities, can it be doubted that they all have their physical cause, and does it suffice not to perceive it in order to deny that it exists? These apparent irregularities undoubtedly come from some laws unknown to us and that nature follows quite as faithfully as those which are known to us; by some agent that we do not perceive, and of which the obstacle or the cooperation has fixed measures in all its operations: otherwise it would be necessary to say flatly that there are some actions

without a principle and some effects without a cause; which is repugnant to all philosophy.

Let us assume two weights in equilibrium, and nevertheless unequal; to the smallest let the quantity be added which is the difference between them: either the two weights will still remain in equilibrium, and we shall have a cause without effect; or the equilibrium will be broken, and we shall have an effect without cause. But if the weights were of iron, and there were a particle of magnet hidden under one of the two, the precision of nature would then remove from it the appearance of precision, and by virtue of exactitude it would seem to lack it. There is not a form, not an operation, not a law in the physical world to which one could not apply some example similar to the one which I just proposed for weight.

You say that no known being is of a precisely mathematical form; I ask you, Sir, if there is some form possible which is not, and if the most bizarre orbit is not as regular in the eyes of nature as a perfect circle is to ours. As for the rest I imagine that, if some body could have this apparent regularity, it would only be the universe itself, supposing it full and limited; for mathematical forms, being only abstractions, only have relations to themselves; whereas all those of natural bodies are relative to other bodies, and to any movements which modify them: therefore that would still not prove anything against the precision of nature, even if we were in agreement over what you understand by this word *precision*.

You distinguish events that have effects from those which have none. I doubt that this distinction is sound. Every event seems to me necessarily to have some effect, whether moral or physical, or composed of the two, but which are not always perceived, because the connection of events is even more difficult to follow than that of men; as in general one ought not to look for effects more considerable than the events which produce them, the smallness of causes often renders the examination ridiculous; even though the effects might be certain, and also several almost imperceptible effects often unite to produce a considerable event. Add that such an effect does not fail to occur, although it acts outside of the body which produces it. Thus, the dust that a carriage raises can do nothing for the operation of the vehicle and influence that of the world; but as there is nothing foreign to the universe, everything which happens there, acts necessarily on the universe itself.[13] Therefore, Sir, your examples appear to me more ingenious than convincing; I see a thousand plausible reasons why it would perhaps not be indifferent to Europe that a certain day the heiress of Burgundy might be well or badly coiffured; nor to the destiny of Rome, that Caesar might have turned his eyes to the right or to the left, and spat from one or the other side, while going

to the Senate the day he was punished there.[14] In a word, in reminding me of the grain of sand cited by Pascal, I am in several respects of the opinion of your Brahman[15]; and in whatever manner one envisages things, if all events do not have tangible effects, it seems to me incontestable that all have some real ones, of which the human mind easily loses the thread, but which are never confused by nature.

You say it is demonstrated that the celestial bodies make their revolution in non-resistant space.[16] It was surely a beautiful thing to demonstrate; but according to the custom of the ignorant, I have very little faith in demonstrations which surpass my grasp. I would imagine that in order to build up this one, one must just about have reasoned in this manner:

A certain force acting according to a certain law ought to give to the Stars a certain motion in a non-resistant environment; but the Stars have exactly calculated motion; therefore there is no resistance. But who can know if there are not perhaps a million other possible laws, without counting the genuine one, according to which the same motions would be explained still better in a fluid than in a vacuum by this one?[17] Has not the abhorrence of a vacuum for a long time explained most of the effects that have since been attributed to the action of air? Other experiments having since destroyed the abhorrence of the vacuum is not everything found filled? Has the vacuum not been reestablished on new calculations? Who will reply to us that a still more exact system will not destroy it over again? Let us leave aside the innumerable difficulties that a Physicist would perhaps encounter on the nature of light and of illuminated spaces; but do you in good faith believe that Bayle, whose wisdom and caution in matters of opinion I, like you, admire, would have found your own opinion so demonstrated?[18] In general it seems that the Skeptics forget themselves a little as soon as they take up the dogmatic tone, and that they ought to use the term *to demonstrate* more soberly than anyone. What are not the means of being believed, when one plumes oneself for knowing nothing, while affirming so many things?

As for the rest, you have made a very fitting correction in Pope's system, by observing that there is no proportional gradation between the creatures and the Creator, and that, if the chain of created beings leads to God, it is because he holds it, and not because he terminates it.[19]

On the good of the whole, preferable to that of its parts, you have man say: "I ought to be as dear to my master, I, a thinking and feeling being, as the planets which probably do not feel at all."[20] Undoubtedly this material universe ought not to be dearer to its Author than a single thinking and feeling being. But the system of this universe which produces, conserves, and perpetuates all the thinking and feeling beings

ought to be dearer to him than a single one of these beings; he can therefore, despite all his goodness, or rather through his very goodness, sacrifice something of the happiness of individuals to the conservation of the whole. I believe, I hope, I am worth more in the eyes of God that the land of a planet; but if the planets are inhabited, as is probable, why would I be worth more in his eyes than all the inhabitants of Saturn? These ideas have been nicely turned to ridicule. It is certain that all the analogies favor this population, and that it is only human pride that might be opposed. But this population being assumed, the conservation of the universe seems to have, for God himself, a morality which multiplies itself by the number of inhabited worlds.

That the corpse of a man nourishes some worms, some wolves, or some plants is not, I admit, a compensation for the death of this man;[21] but if, in the system of the universe, it is necessary for the conservation of the human race that there be a circulation of substance among men, animals' and vegetables, then the particular ill of an individual contributes to the general good. I die, I am eaten by worms; but my children, my brothers will live as I have lived, and I do, by the order of nature, for all men, what Codrus, Curtius, the Decii, the Philaeni, and a thousand others did voluntarily for a small part of men.[22]

To return, Sir, to the system that you attack, I believe that one cannot examine it suitably without distinguishing carefully particular evil, whose existence no Philosopher has ever denied, from the general evil that the optimist denies. It is not a question of knowing whether each one of us suffers or not; but whether it be good that the universe exists, and whether our ills be inevitable in the constitution of the universe. Thus the addition of an article would render, it seems, the proposition more exact; and in place of *Everything is good*,[23] it would be more worthwhile to say: *The whole is good*, or *Everything is good for the whole*. Then it is quite evident that no man would know how to give direct proof either for or against; for these proofs depend on a perfect knowledge of the constitution of the world and of the purpose of its Author, and this knowledge is incontestably above human intelligence. The true principles of optimism can be drawn neither from the properties of matter, nor from the mechanics of the universe, but only by inference from the perfections of God who presides over everything;[24] so that one does not prove the existence of God by the system of Pope, but the system of Pope by the existence of God, and it is incontrovertible that from the question of Providence is derived that of the origin of evil. But if these two questions have not been better treated, the one before the other, it is because one has always reasoned so badly on Providence that the absurd things

that have been spoken about it have gravely confused all the corollaries that could be drawn from this great and consoling dogma.

The first who spoiled the cause of God are the Priests and the Devout, who do not allow that anything occurs according to the established order, but always have Divine justice intervene in purely natural events, and in order to be sure of their occurrence, punish and chastise the wicked, put to the proof or requite the good indiscriminately with some benefits or misfortunes, according to the event. For myself, I do not know whether it is a good Theology; but I find it a bad manner of reasoning, to base the proofs of Providence indiscriminately on the *pros* and *cons*, and to attribute to it unselectively everything which would equally occur without it.

The Philosophers, in their turn, hardly seem to me to be more reasonable, when I see them blame Heaven that they are not insensitive, cry that all is lost when they have a tooth ache, or when they are poor, or when they have been robbed, and charge God, as Seneca says, to watch over their valise.[25] If some tragic accident had caused Cartouche or Caesar to perish in their infancy one would have said: What crimes have they committed? These two brigands lived, and we say: Why were they permitted to live?[26] In contrast the devout person will say in the first instance: God wanted to punish the father by taking his son from him; and in the second: God preserved the child for the chastisement of the people. Thus, whatever part nature might have taken, Providence is always right among the Devout and always wrong among the Philosophers. Perhaps in the order of things human it is neither wrong nor right, because everything keeps to the shared law, and because there is no exception for anyone. It is to be believed that particular events are nothing here below in the eyes of the Master of the universe, that his Providence is only universal, that he is content to preserve the genera and the species, and to preside over the whole without being disturbed by the manner in which each individual spends this brief life.[27] Does a wise King who desires that everyone live happily in his States have to inform himself whether the taverns are good there? The passer-by grumbles one night when they are bad, and laughs the rest of his days at an impatience misplaced this way. *Commorandi enim Natura diversorium nobis non habitandi dedit.*[28]

To think rightly in this respect, it seems that things ought to be considered relatively in the physical order, and absolutely in the moral order: with the result that the greatest idea that I can give myself of Providence is that each material being be disposed the best way possible in relation to the whole, and each intelligent and sensitive being the best way possible in relation to himself; which signifies in other terms that for whom-

ever feels his existence, it is worth more to exist than not to exist.[29] But it is necessary to apply this rule to the total duration of each sensitive being, and not to several particular instances of its duration, such as human life;[30] which shows how much the question of Providence depends on that of the immortality of the soul in which I have the good fortune to believe, without being unaware that reason can doubt it, and on that of the eternity of punishments which neither you nor I, nor ever a man thinking well of God, will ever believe.[31]

If I restore these different questions to their common principle, it seems to me that they are all related to that of the existence of God. If God exists, he is perfect; if he is perfect, he is wise, powerful, and just; if he is wise and powerful, all is good; if he is just and powerful, my soul is immortal; if my soul is immortal, thirty years of life are nothing for me, and are perhaps necessary for the maintenance of the universe. If one grants me the first proposition, never will one shake those following; if one denies it, it is not necessary to dispute over its consequences.

Neither of us is in this last case. So far at least am I from being able to presume anything similar on your part in reading the collection of your works, the greater part offer me the greatest, most gentle, most consoling ideas of the Divinity, and I much prefer a Christian after your fashion than after that of the Sorbonne.[32]

As for me, I naively admit to you that neither the pro nor the con seems to me demonstrated on this point by the lights of reason, and that if the Theist bases his sentiments only on probabilities, the Atheist, even less precise, seems to me only to base his own on some contrary possibilities. Moreover, the objections, on both sides, are always insoluble because they take in some things of which men have no genuine idea at all.[33] I agree to all that, and yet I believe in God quite as strongly as I believe in any other truth, because to believe and not to believe are the things which depend least on me, because the state of doubt is a state too violent for my soul, because when my reason wavers, my faith cannot for long remain in suspense, and is determined without it, that at least a thousand subjects of preference entice me from the most consoling side and join the weight of hope to the equilibrium of reason.

[I remember that what has struck me the most forcefully in my whole life, on the fortuitous arrangement of the universe, is the twenty-first philosophical thought, where is shown by the laws of analysis of chance that when the quantity of the throws is infinite, the difficulty of the event is more than sufficiently compensated by the multiplicity of the throws, and that consequently the mind ought to be more astonished by the hypothetical continuation of chaos than by the real birth of the uni-

verse.[34] This is, while assuming motion necessary, what has never been said with more force to my mind on this dispute; and, as for me, I declare that I do not know the least response that common sense might have, whether true or false, if not to deny as false what one cannot know, that motion might be essential to matter. From another perspective, I do not know whether the generation of organic bodies and the perpetuity of seeds have ever been explained by materialism; but there is this difference between these two opposed positions, that, while both the one and the other seem equally convincing to me, the last alone persuades me.[35] As for the first, let someone come to tell me that, from a fortuitous throw of letters the *Henriade* was composed, I would deny it without hesitating; it is more possible for chance to bring it about than for my mind to believe it, and I feel that there is a point where moral impossibilities are for me equivalent to a physical certainty. One will have to speak finely to me about the eternity of time; I have not traversed it; about the infinity of the throws; I have not counted them; and my incredulity, quite as little philosophical as one will like, will triumph thereon over the very demonstration itself.[36] I do not deny that what I call on that matter a *proof of sentiment* might be called *prejudice*; and I do not give this obstinacy of belief as a model; but with a good faith perhaps without example, I give it as an invincible disposition of my soul, that nothing will ever be able to surmount, which up to now I have never regretted, and which one can never attack without cruelty.][37]

This, then, is a truth from which we both depart, in support of which you feel how easy optimism is to defend and Providence to justify, and to you it is not necessary to repeat the trite but solid reasons which have been provided so often on this subject.[38] With regard to the Philosophers, who do not acknowledge the principle, it is unnecessary to dispute with them on these matters, because what is only a proof of sentiment for us cannot become a demonstration for them, and because it is not a reasonable speech to say to a man: You ought to believe this, because I believe it. They, on their part, ought not to dispute with us on these same matters, because these are only corollaries of the principal proposition that a decent adversary hardly dares oppose to them, and that in their turn they would be very wrong to require that the corollary be proven to them independently of the proposition which serves as its base. I think they ought not, for still another reason. It is that there is inhumanity in troubling peaceful souls, and in afflicting men to no purpose, when what one wishes to teach them is neither certain not useful. I think, in a word, that by your example, the superstition which troubles society

cannot be attacked too strongly nor the Religion that sustains it too much respected.[39]

But, like you, I am indignant that the faith of everyone is not in the most perfect liberty, and that man dares control the interior of consciences where he is unable to penetrate; as if it depended on us to believe or not to believe in matters where demonstration has no place, and that reason could ever be subjected to authority. Have the Kings of this world therefore any superintendency in the other? And have they any right to torment their Subjects here below in order to force them to go to Paradise? No; all human Government is limited by its nature to civil duties; and whatever the Sophist Hobbes might have been able to say on this, when a man serves the State well, he does not owe an account to anyone of the manner in which he serves God.[40]

I do not know if this just Being will not one day punish every tyranny exercised in his name; I am quite sure, at least, that he will not participate in it, and will not refuse eternal happiness to any virtuous unbeliever of good faith. Can I, without offending his goodness and even his justice doubt that an upright heart redeems an involuntary error, and that irreproachable morals are well worth a thousand bizarre creeds prescribed by men, and rejected by reason? I shall say more; if I could, at my choice, buy good works at the price of my faith, and compensate by dint of virtue my supposed incredulity, I would not hesitate an instant, and I would rather be able to say to God: I have done, without thinking of thee, the good which is pleasing to thee, and my heart followed thy will without knowing it; than to say to him, as I must do one day: Alas! I loved thee and have not ceased to offend thee; I have known thee, and have done nothing to please thee.

There is, I admit, a sort of profession of faith that the laws can impose; but beyond the principles of morality and natural right, it ought to be purely negative, because there can exist Religions which attack the foundation of society, and because it is necessary to begin by exterminating these Religions in order to assure the peace of the State.[41] Of these dogmas to proscribe, intolerance is easily the most odious; but it is necessary to catch it at its source; for the most sanguinary Fanatics change their language according to their fortune, and preach only patience and gentleness when they are not the strongest. Therefore I call intolerant by principles any man who imagines that one cannot be a good man without believing everything that he believes, and damns unmercifully all those who do not think like him. Indeed, the faithful are rarely of a disposition to leave reprobates in peace in this world; and a Saint who

thinks he lives among the damned willingly takes up in advance the business of the devil. Yet if there were some intolerant unbelievers who wished to force the people to believe nothing, I would proscribe them no less severely than those who wish to force belief in everything which pleases them.

I would therefore wish that in each State one might have a moral code, or a sort of civil profession of faith, which contained positively the social maxims that everyone would be bound to admit, and negatively the fanatical maxims that one would be bound to reject, not as impious, but as seditious. Thus every Religion which could not agree with it would be proscribed; and everyone would be free to have none other than the code itself. Done carefully, this work would, it seems to me, be the most useful book ever composed, and perhaps the only one necessary for men. There, Sir, is a subject for you. I passionately wish that you might want to undertake this work and adorn it with your Poetry in order that, everyone being able to learn it easily, it might from childhood introduce to all hearts these feelings of gentleness and humanity which shine in your writings and which are always lacking among the devout. I beseech you to contemplate this project, which ought to be pleasing at least to your soul.[42] You have given us in your *Poem on Natural Religion* the Catechism of man: give us now, in what I propose to you, the Catechism of the Citizen.[43] This is a matter to contemplate for a long time, and perhaps to reserve for the last of your works, in order to complete with a benefit to the human race the most brilliant career that a man of letters has ever pursued.[44]

I cannot refrain, Sir, from noting in this connection a quite singular opposition between you and me over the subject of this letter. Surfeited with glory, and undeceived by vain grandeur, you live free in the bosom of abundance; quite sure of immortality, you philosophize peacefully on the nature of the soul; and if the body or the heart suffers, you have Tronchin for a doctor and for a friend: however, you find only evil on the Earth. And I, obscure, poor, and tormented by an incurable malady, I meditate with pleasure in my retreat, and find that all is good.[45] From whence might these apparent contradictions come? You yourself have explained it: you enjoy, but I hope, and hope adorns everything.[46]

I have as much difficulty in leaving this tiresome letter as you will have in finishing it. Pardon me, great man, for a zeal which is perhaps indiscreet, but which would not be vented on you, if I esteemed you less. God forbid that I would want to offend the one of my contemporaries whose talents I honor the most, and whose writings speak the best to my heart; but it concerns the cause of Providence, from which I expect all things.

After having so long drawn consolations and courage from your lessons, it is hard for me that now you remove all that from me, in order only to offer me an uncertain and vague hope, rather as a present palliative than as a compensation to come. No: I have suffered too much in this life not to expect another one. All the subtleties of Metaphysics will not make me doubt for a moment the immortality of the soul, and a beneficent Providence. I feel it, I believe it, I wish it, I hope it, I shall defend it until my last breath; and it will be, of all the controversies that I shall have sustained, the only one where my interest will not be forgotten.

I am, Sir, etc.[47]

Letter from Voltaire to Rousseau

Les Délices,
September 12, 1756

My dear philosopher, we are able you and I, in the intervals of our ills, to reason in verse and in prose. But at the present moment, you will pardon me for leaving there all these philosophical discussions which are only amusements. Your letter is very beautiful, but I have with me one of my nieces who for three weeks has been in rather great danger; I am her sick-nurse and very sick myself. I shall wait to get better before daring to think with you.[1] Monsieur Tronchin has told me that you will finally come into your fatherland. Monsieur d'Alembert will tell you what a philosophical life one leads in my little refuge. It would deserve the name it bears, if it could possess you sometimes. It is said that you hate to stay in cities; I have that in common with you; I would like to resemble you in so many things, that this conformity could determine you to come to see us. My condition does not permit me to say more to you about it. Be assured that of all those who have read you, no one esteems you more than myself, despite my bad jokes, and that of all those who will see you, no one is disposed more to love you tenderly.

I begin by suppressing all ceremony.

Letter from Mr. Philopolis on the Subject of the Discourse of Mr. J.-J. Rousseau of Geneva on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality among Men

I have, Sir, just read the Discourse of Mr. J.-J. Rousseau of Geneva *On the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men.*[1] I have admired the coloring of this strange picture, but I have not been able to admire in the same way its outline and the accuracy of representation. I hold a high opinion of the merit and talents of Mr. Rousseau, and congratulate Geneva, which is also my own fatherland, for counting him among the famous men to whom she has given birth: but I regret that he has adopted ideas that seem to me so opposed to the truth and so ill suited to make happy people.

Much will, without doubt, be written against this new Discourse, as much has been written against the one that won the prize of the Academy of Dijon: and because much has been written and much more will be written against Mr. Rousseau, a paradox that he has cherished only too much will be made more dear to him. For myself, one who has no desire to write a book against Mr. Rousseau and who is very convinced that disputation is, of all the methods, that which has the least effect on this bold and independent genius, I limit myself to proposing that he deepen a very simple line of reasoning which seems to me to contain what is most essential in the question.

Here is the line of reasoning.

All that results immediately from the *faculties* of man, should it not be said to result from his *nature*? Now, I think that it is very well demonstrated that *the state of society* results immediately from the faculties of man: I do not want to introduce other proofs to our author than his own ideas on the establishment of societies; ingenious ideas that he has so elegantly expressed in the second part of his Discourse. If, therefore, *the state of society* ensues from the faculties of man, it is *natural* to man. It would thus be as unreasonable to complain that these faculties, in developing, have given birth to that state, as it would be to complain that GOD has given man such faculties.

Man is what was required in the place that he was to occupy in the Universe. It was apparently necessary that there be men who built cities as it was necessary that there be beavers who build beaver-dams. That *perfectibility* which Mr. Rousseau makes into the characteristic that essentially distinguishes man from brute should, from the author's own admission, lead man to the point where we see him today. To wish that this did not occur would be to wish that man were not *man*: does the eagle who is lost in the clouds grovel in the dust like the snake?

The savage man of Mr. Rousseau, that man that he cherishes with such indulgence, is not at all *the man* that GOD wanted to make: but God made *orangutans* and *monkeys* who are not men.

Therefore, when Mr. Rousseau speaks out with such vehemence and stubbornness against *the state of society*, he is rising up *without thinking about it* against the WILL of HIM who made man and who ordained that state. Are *the facts* anything other than the expression of his LOVABLE WILL?

When, with the brush of a Le Brun,[2] the author paints before our eyes the frightful picture of the evils to which the civil state has given birth, he forgets that the planet where one sees these things is a part of the immense Whole which we do not know at all, but which we know to be the work of a PERFECT WISDOM.

Thus, let us renounce forever the chimerical enterprise of proving that man would be better if he were otherwise: should the bee who constructs such regular honeycombs wish to judge the facade of the Louvre? In the name of good sense and reason, let us take man as he is with all his dependencies; let the world go on as it does, and be certain that it is going as well as it could go.

If it were a question of justifying Providence in the eyes of men, Leibnitz and Pope have done so, and the immortal works of these sublime geniuses are monuments raised to the glory of reason. The Discourse of Mr. Rousseau is a monument raised to the mind, but to the mind chagrined and discontented with itself and with others.

When our philosopher would like to dedicate his intelligence and his talents to uncover the origins of things for us, to show us the more or less slow developments of goods and evils; in a word, to follow humanity in the tortuous trajectory it follows; the endeavors of this original and fertile Genius could gain for us precious knowledge on these interesting topics. We would then hurry to harvest this knowledge and to offer to its author the tribute of recognition and praise which it would have earned him and which would not have been, I am sure, the principal end of his research.

There are grounds, Sir, to be astonished, and I would be even more astonished, if I had been less called upon to reflect on the sources of the diversity of the opinions of men; there are, I say, grounds to be astonished that a writer who has known the advantages of a good government so well and who has so well depicted them in his beautiful dedication to our Republic, in which he has claimed to see all these advantages united, has so quickly and completely lost them from sight in his Discourse. It would be making useless efforts to persuade oneself that a writer who would without doubt be angry not to be thought to be judicious, seriously preferred to go pass his life in the woods, if his health permitted it, rather than to live amidst fellow-citizens who were dear and worthy of being so. Had one ever presumed that in a century like ours a writer who thinks, would advance this strange paradox, which alone includes such a host of inconsistencies, not to say anything stronger? *If nature destined us to be saints,*[3] *I almost dare affirm that the state of reflection is a state contrary to nature and that the man who meditates is a depraved animal.*

As I suggested in beginning this letter, my aim is not to prove to Mr. Rousseau by arguments that enough others will make without me and which would perhaps better not be made at all, the superiority of the state of *citizen* over the state of *savage man*. Who ever imagined that this would be put in question! My goal is solely to try to make our author feel how much his continual complaints are superfluous and misplaced, and how much it is evident that *society* enters in the destiny of our being.

I have spoken to Mr. Rousseau with all the frankness that the relationship of a compatriot authorizes. I have such a high idea of the qualities of his heart that I have not thought for an instant that he might not take these reflections in good manner. Only love of the truth has dictated them to me. If nonetheless, in making them, there has escaped from me some thing that could displease Mr. Rousseau, I beg him to pardon me and to be persuaded of the purity of my intentions.

I will only say one more word. It is about *pity*, that virtue so celebrated by our author and which was, according to him, the finest endowment of man in the infancy of the world. I beg Mr. Rousseau to reflect well on the following questions.

Would a man or any *sensitive* being who had never known pain have *pity*, and would he be moved by the sight of an infant being strangled?

Why is it that the populace, to which Mr. Rousseau gives such a large dose of *pity*, enjoys with such avidity the spectacle of an unfortunate dying on the rack?

Does *the affection* that female animals show to their young have as its

object these young or the mother? If by chance it were the latter, the well-being of the young would have only been better assured.

I have the honor of being, etc.

PHILOPOLIS, citizen of Geneva
At Geneva, August 25, 1755

Letter from J.J. Rousseau to Mr. Philopolis

You want me to reply, Sir, since you ask me questions. Moreover, what is at issue is a work dedicated to my Fellow Citizens. In defending it I must justify the honor they did me in accepting it. I leave aside the good and bad things about me in your Letter, because they balance out just about evenly, because I take little interest in them, the public takes less, and because all that does nothing for the search for truth. I begin, therefore, with the line of reasoning that you propose as essential to the question I have tried to resolve.

The state of society, you tell me, results immediately from the faculties of man and consequently from his nature. To wish that man had not become sociable, would therefore be to wish that he were not man, and it is attacking the work of God to protest against human society. Allow me, Sir, to suggest to you one difficulty in turn before I resolve yours. I would spare you this detour if I knew a more certain path by which to reach the goal.

Let us assume that some scientists were to find one day the secret of speeding up old age and the art of inducing men to make use of this rare discovery. This persuasion would perhaps not be as difficult to produce as it appears at first sight. Reason, that great vehicle of all our stupidities, would hardly be wanting in this one. Philosophers especially, and sensible people, would step eagerly into the age of Nestor to throw off the yoke of the passions and taste the precious repose of the soul, and would willingly renounce desires that can be satisfied in order to be protected from those that must be stifled. There would be only a few giddy people who—even blushing for their weakness—would foolishly want to remain young and happy instead of aging in order to be wise.

Let us assume that a singular, bizarre mind, and in sum a man of paradoxes, then had the idea of reproaching others for the absurdity of their maxims, of proving to them that in seeking tranquillity they rush into death, that by dint of being reasonable they only talk drivel, and that if they must be old someday, they should at least try to be so as late as possible.

It is unnecessary to ask whether our sophists, fearing the discredit of their Mystery, would hurry to interrupt this importunate speech-maker.

"Wise old people," they would say to their sectarians, "thank Heaven for the blessings it gives you, and congratulate yourselves always for following its wishes so well. You are decrepit, languishing, cacochymic, it's true. That is man's inevitable fate. But your understanding is healthy. All your limbs are crippled, but your head is all the freer for it. You are unable to act, but you speak like oracles, and if your pains increase from day to day, your Philosophy increases with them. Pity that impetuous youthfulness, whose brute-like health deprives it of the good things linked to your weakness. Happy infirmities that gather around you so many clever Pharmacists supplied with more drugs than you have ills, so many learned Doctors who know your pulse thoroughly, who know the Greek names for all your rheumatisms, so many zealous comforters and faithful heirs who guide you pleasantly to your final hour. What help would have been lost to you if you had been unable to give yourself the illnesses that made them necessary."

Can we not imagine that, next exhorting our imprudent warner, they would speak to him just about like this:

"Stop these impious discourses, rash declaimer. Do you dare blame in this way the will of him who made the human race? Does the state of old age not flow from man's constitution? Is it not natural for man to age? What are you doing, then, in your seditious discourses except to attack a Law of nature and consequently the will of its Creator? Since man ages, God wills him to age. Are facts anything other than the expression of his will? Learn that the young man is not at all the one God wished to make, and that to be prompt to obey his orders, we must hasten to grow old."

Assuming all that, I ask you, Sir, whether the man of paradoxes ought to be silent or answer; and if it is the latter, to be so kind as to indicate what he ought to say; I will then try to resolve your objection.

Since you claim to attack me with my own system, I urge you not to forget that according to me society is natural to the human species just as decrepitude is to the individual, and that arts, Laws, and Governments are as necessary for Peoples as are canes for the elderly. The entire difference is that the state of old age is derived from the nature of man alone, and that of society is derived from the nature of the human race, not immediately as you say but only, as I have proved, with the help of certain external circumstances that may or may not happen, or at least occur sooner or later and consequently speed up or slow down the progress. Since several of these circumstances are dependent on the will of men, to establish a perfect comparison I was obliged to assume that the individual has the power to speed up his old age just as the species has the power to delay its own. The state of society having a terminal point,

then, which men are in control of reaching sooner or later, it is not useless to show them the danger of moving so fast, and the miseries of a condition they take to be the perfection of the species.

Confronted with the list of ills burdening men and that I maintain are their own work, you and Leibniz assure me that all is good, and that providence is therefore justified. I was far from believing that it needed help for its justification from the Leibnizian Philosophy or any other. Do you yourself seriously think that a system of Philosophy, whatever it may be, can be more blameless than the Universe, and that to disculpate providence the arguments of a Philosopher are more convincing than the works of God? Besides, to deny that evil exists is a very convenient way to excuse the author of evil. The Stoics formerly made themselves ridiculous at less cost.

According to Leibniz and Pope, everything that is, is good. If there are societies, it is because the general good wishes it that way. If there are none, the general good wishes that there be none, and if someone persuaded men to go back to live in forests, it would be good that they go back to live there. We should not apply to the nature of things an idea of good or evil that is derived only from their relationships, for these can be good relative to the whole although bad in themselves. What contributes to the general good may be a particular evil from which we are permitted to escape when that is possible.[1] For if this evil while it is endured is useful for the whole, the opposite good that we attempt to substitute for it will be no less useful as soon as it occurs. For the same reason that everything is good as it is, if someone attempts to change the state of things, it is good that he attempts to change it, and whether it is good or bad for him to be successful is something that can be learned only from the outcome and not from reason. Nothing in this prevents a particular evil from being a real evil for the person who endures it. It was good for the whole that we became civilized since we are that, but it would certainly have been better for us not to be. Leibniz would never have drawn anything from his system that could argue against this proposition, and it is clear that properly understood optimism has no effect either for or against me.

In addition, it is not to Leibniz or Pope that I must reply, but to you alone who, without distinguishing between the universal evil they deny and the particular evil they do not deny, claim it is sufficient that something exists for it not to be permitted to desire that it exist differently. But, Sir, if everything is good as it is, everything was good as it was before there were Governments and Laws. It was therefore at least superfluous to establish them, and then Jean-Jacques would have had an

easy time of it against Philopolis with your system. If everything is good as it is in the manner in which you understand, what good is it to correct our vices, cure our ills, rectify our errors? What good are our Pulpits, our Tribunals, our Academies? Why call a Doctor when you have a fever? How do you know whether the good of the greater whole which you do not know does not require that you have a stroke, and whether the health of the inhabitants of Saturn or Sirius would not suffer from the recovery of your health? Let everything go as it may, so that everything always goes well. If everything is the best it can be, you should blame any action whatsoever. For every action necessarily produces some change in the state of things at the moment it occurs; therefore one cannot touch anything without doing evil, and the most perfect Quietism is the only virtue that remains for man. Finally, if everything is good as it is, it is good that there are Laps, Eskimos, Algonquins, Chickasaws, Caribs who do without our regulations, Hottentots who laugh at them, and one Genevan who approves of them. Leibniz himself would agree about this.[2]

Man, you say, is what was needed in the place that he was to occupy in the universe. But men differ so much according to time and place that with logic like that one would be subject to drawing very contradictory and very inconclusive consequences from the particular to the Universal. One mistake in Geography is all that would be necessary to topple this entire supposed doctrine that deduces what ought to be from what is seen. Beavers, the Indian will say, should hide themselves in dens; man should sleep outdoors, in a Hammock suspended from trees. No, no, the Tartar will say, Man is made to sleep in a Wagon. Poor people, our Philopolis will cry with a look of pity; don't you see that man is made to build cities! When it is a matter of reasoning about human nature, the true Philosopher is neither Indian, nor Tartar, nor from Geneva, nor from Paris, but he is man.

I believe that the monkey is a Beast, and I have stated the reason. You have had the goodness to inform me that the Orangutang is one too, and I admit that after the facts I have cited, the proof of that seems difficult to me. You philosophize too well to pronounce about that as lightly as our travelers who sometimes risk without much ceremony placing their peers in the ranks of beasts. You will surely oblige the public, then, and you will even instruct naturalists by telling us the means you used to decide this question.

In my dedicatory Letter, I congratulated my Fatherland for having one of the best governments that can exist. I found in the Discourse that there must be very few good Governments. I do not see the contradiction

you note in that. But how do you know, Sir, that I would go and live in the woods if my health permitted it, rather than among my Fellow Citizens for whom you know my affection? Far from saying anything like that in my work, you must have found in it very strong reasons not to choose that type of life. I feel too strongly in my own particular case how little I can forego living with men as corrupt as myself, and the wise man himself, if there is one, would not now seek happiness deep in the wilderness. When possible, one must arrange to live in one's Fatherland in order to love it and to serve it. Happy is the person who—deprived of that advantage—can at least live in the bosom of friendship in the shared Fatherland of the human Race, in that vast refuge open to all men, where austere wisdom and foolhardy youth are equally happy; where reign humanity, hospitality, gentleness, and all the delights of easy-going society; where the Poor man still finds Friends, virtue finds examples that inspire it, and reason finds guides that enlighten it. It is on that great Stage of fortune, vice, and sometimes virtues that one may fruitfully observe the spectacle of life; but it is in his country that everyone ought to finish his own life in peace.

It seems to me, Sir, that you criticize me very seriously for a reflection that appears to me very accurate and that, accurate or not, does not have in my text the meaning you choose to give it by the addition of a single Letter. *If nature destined us to be saints,* you have me say, *I almost dare affirm that the state of reflection is a state contrary to nature and that the man who meditates is a depraved animal.*[3] I admit to you that if I had confused healthiness with saintliness, and if the proposition were true, I would believe myself very worthy of becoming a great saint myself in the next world or at least of always being healthy in this one.

I end, Sir, by replying to your last three questions. I will not waste the time you have given me to think about it. That is something I was careful to do in advance.

Would a man or any other sensitive being who had never known pain have pity and would he be moved by the sight of an infant being strangled? I reply that he would not.

Why is it that the Populace, to which Mr. Rousseau gives such a large dose of pity, enjoys with such avidity the spectacle of an unfortunate dying on the rack? For the same reason you go to the theater to weep and to see Seide kill his Father or Thyeste drink the blood of his son.[4] Pity is such a delightful feeling that it is not surprising that we seek to experience it. Besides, everyone has a secret curiosity to study the movements of Nature at the approach of that fearful moment that no one can escape. Add

to that the pleasure of being the neighborhood orator for two months, and of relating to the neighbors with pathos the fine death of the last person to be broken on the rack.

Does the affection that female animals show to their young have as its object these young or the mother? First the mother, for her need, then the young through habit. I said that in the Discourse. *If by chance it were the latter, the well-being of the young would have only been better assured.* I would believe that to be so. However, this maxim requires not so much to be expanded as to be contracted, for as soon as the Chicks have hatched, the Hen cannot be seen to have any need of them, yet her maternal tenderness is nonetheless without equal.

These, Sir, are my replies. Note besides that in this matter as in that of the first discourse I am always the monster who maintains that man is naturally good, and my adversaries are always the decent people who, for the public edification, labor to prove that nature has made only scoundrels.[5]

I am, insofar as possible with a person one does not know,

Sir, etc.

Observations of Charles-Georges LeRoy on the Notes of the Discourse on Inequality

[*Observation*]

Note (IV*).[1] It is true that the earth left to itself is very fertile, but what should be concluded from this? It is not less certain that man, if frugivorous and nomadic, would die of hunger during five or six months of the year. The fruits that are mealy, like the acorn, the chestnut, etc. are those that can be kept the longest; but all are rotten or germinated by April unless a great care has been taken. Then it would be necessary to admit storage and a fixed habitation. There are no uniquely frugivorous animals except those who can pasture and nourish themselves from mushrooms (*boutons*) and tree bark. The wild boars who ordinarily live from roots, from acorns, etc. are forced during the spring to devour young animals, rabbits, etc. It must be agreed that we are like wild boars in many respects.

[*Reply by Rousseau*]

I do not know about this resemblence, and I also don't know why, for lack of fruits, man would not graze on grass, young shoots, and use his hands or nails to dig up roots, as many of our kind [men][2] have done in desert places [where they have lived on roots for long periods]. Moreover, people always cite the long winters to me and do not want to notice that for more than half of the earth, there is almost no winter, trees don't lose their leaves, and there are fruits year round. The reasons one opposes to me are always drawn from places like Paris, London, or some other little corner of the world. I try to draw mine only from the world itself.[3]

[*Observation*]

Note (VIII*).[4] The hares, the rabbits, and many other frugivorous animals have up to seven or eight young, and the carnivores that eat them, like the weasels, etc. do not have more. Among the birds, the partridges have many more than the hawks. The goatsucker which only lives from flies and does not eat any grain only has two young as does the turtle-dove.

It is not true that it takes more time for frugivores than for carnivores to find their food. The wild animals who pasture go out (for the most

part) every night at the same time, and come back before the day. The carnivorous animals use the same time to hunt, but the hunt is every day. Sometimes it is a matter of an instant; more often it takes all night. It is easy to confirm the entire route that a wolf has been obliged to take. It even happens that daybreak surprises them while still hungry. It is in this case that wolves attack infants. It is therefore not the facility of livelihood that determines the number of infants. One always supposes that everything is well regulated in nature. Confirm your facts, and you will see perhaps that everything is not well regulated.

[*Reply by Rousseau*]

The difficulty that carnivorous beasts have finding their prey in countries cleared and cultivated by men would perhaps not be the same if the whole earth were left fallow. It is certain that you can place a cat or a wolf in a situation where obtaining his food takes less than twenty minutes out of twenty-four hours. But whatever assumption you make, a horse or an ox must always take several hours to graze, and therefore they will always be at a general disadvantage. Besides, whatever can be observed about particular facts, the proof that all is well organized is taken from a general and incontestable fact, which is that all the species continue to exist. But I understand that we can often be wrong, and myself especially, about the choice and application of the rules.[5]

[*Observation*]

Note (XII*).[6] The fact that Mr. Locke cites is true, and one cannot contest it. The society between the male and the female wolf lasts in a very constant manner until the young no longer have need of help. Naturally, the family does not even dissolve until the mating season. As for deer, they interbreed indifferently, and the only choice that the doe makes is that of the youngest while the older ones are fighting. It is true that, in spite of their reputation, the wolf bitches are quite faithful; whereas the does are the biggest whores on earth, which could make one believe that in fact we are frugivorous. Among the birds, those of prey, and namely the crows, have a society that lasts until the education of the family is completed, and I have seen a wild turtle-dove mate with two successive males on the same tree. There are, on the length of the society, many variations in other species. The two grey partridges stay with their family until the mating season. The male red partridge abandons its female at the moment when she begins to incubate the eggs. Nevertheless their nourishment is the same. It does not seem that all these details of the way of life have any relationship with the manner of nourishment.[7]

Natural Right

Encyclopedia (Volume V)

The use of this word is so familar that there is hardly anyone who is not convinced within himself that the thing is known to him with self-evidence. This internal feeling is common to the philosopher and to the man who has not reflected: with the only difference that given the question, ***What is right?***, the latter, lacking both words and ideas, sends you to the tribunal of the conscience and remains silent whereas the former is only reduced to silence and to more profound reflections after having turned in a vicious circle which brings him back to the same point where he began, or which throws him into some other question no less difficult to resolve than the one that he thought he took care of by his definition.

The philosopher who is asked says: "Right is the foundation, or the first reason, of justice." But what is justice? "It is the obligation to give each one that which is his due." But what is it that is due to one rather than to another, in a state of things where everything would be for all, and where perhaps the distinct idea of obligation would not yet exist? And what would one owe to others who permitted them everything and did not demand anything of them? It is here that the philosopher begins to feel that, of all the concepts of morality, that of ***natural right*** is one of the most important and of the most difficult to determine. Thus we will believe a great deal has been done in this article if we succeed in establishing clearly some principles with the aid of which one can resolve the most important difficulties that are customarily proposed against the concept of ***natural right***.

To do this, it is necessary to reconsider things from the start, and to advance nothing that is not evident: at least with that evidence of which moral questions are susceptible and which satisfies every sensible man.

i. It is evident that, if man is not free or if his instantaneous determinations or even his oscillations are born from something material that is exterior to his soul, his choice is not a pure act of an incorporeal substance and of a simple faculty of that substance, there will not be either reasoned goodness or wickedness, although there could be animal goodness or wickedness; there will be neither moral good nor evil, neither

justice nor injustice, neither obligation nor right. From which one sees, let it be said in passing, how much it is important to establish solidly the reality, I do not say of *willing*, but of *liberty*, which is ordinarily only confused with *willing*.

ii. We exist in a poor, contentious, uneasy existence. We have passions and needs. We want to be happy, and at every moment the unjust and passionate man feels himself led to do to others what he would not want others to do to himself. This is a judgment that he pronounces deep in his soul and that he can not hide from himself. He sees his wickedness; and it is necessary that he admit it to himself or that he give to everyone the same authority that he takes for himself.

iii. But what reproaches can we make to the man tormented by such violent passions that life itself becomes a burdensome weight to him if he does not satisfy them, and who, to acquire the right to dispose of the existence of others, abandons to them his own. What will we reply if he says boldly: "I am aware that I bring horror and confusion to the human species, but either I must be unhappy or I must cause others to be so, and no one is dearer to me than myself.[1] Don't blame me for this terrible inclination; it isn't a free choice. It is the voice of nature, which is never clearer to me than when it speaks in my favor. But is it only in my heart that it is heard with such violence? O men, it is to you that I appeal. Which of you, on the point of dying, would not buy his own life at the expense of the largest part of the human race, if he was sure to do so with impunity and in secret? But," he will continue, "I am equitable and sincere. If my happiness requires that I do away with all those existences which intrude on me, it is also necessary that an individual, whoever he is, can do away with my [existence] if it intrudes on his. Reason demands it and I accept. I am not so unjust that I require of another a sacrifice that I do not want to make for him."

iv. I perceive at first one thing that seems to be admitted by the good and by the wicked; this is that it is necessary to reason about everything because man is not merely an animal, but an animal who reasons; that there are consequently, in the question at issue, means to discover the truth; that one who refuses to seek it renounces the quality of being a man, and should be treated by the rest of his species as a wild beast; and that, once the truth has been discovered, whoever refuses to conform to it is insane or wicked with a moral wickedness.

v. What will we reply therefore to our violent reasoner before stifling him? That all of his discourse is reduced to knowing whether he acquires

a right over the existence of others in abandoning his own to them: for he does not only want to be happy; he also wants to be equitable, and by his equity distance himself from the epithet ***wicked***; without which he should be stifled without being answered. We will therefore make him notice that, even if what he abandons should belong to him so perfectly that he could dispose of it as he chooses, and that the condition he proposes to others would also be advantageous to them, he has no legitimate authority to make them accept it; that one who says, *I* ***want to live*** has as much reason as one who says *I* ***want to die***; that the latter only has one life and that in abandoning it he makes himself master of an infinity of lives; that his exchange would barely be equitable if there were only himself and one other wicked person on the entire surface of the earth; that it is absurd to make others will that which one wills; that it is uncertain that the danger to which he exposes his fellow equals that to which he is willing to expose himself; that what he allows to risk might not be of a value proportionate to what he forces me to risk; that the question of ***natural right*** is much more complicated that it seems to him; that he constitutes himself judge and party, and that his tribunal could well not have competence in this case.

vi. But if we take from the individual the right to decide the nature of the just and unjust, where will we bring this great question? Where? Before the human race, which alone ought to decide, because the good of all is the only passion it has. Individual wills are suspect, they could be good or wicked; but the general will is always good; it has never been mistaken, and it never will be. If animals were of an order about equal to our own; if there were reliable means of communication between them and ourselves; if they could transmit to us self-evidently their sentiments and their thoughts and know our own with the same evidence: in a word, if they could vote in a general assembly, it would be necessary to appeal to them, and the cause of natural right would no longer be plead before ***humanity***, but before ***animality***. But the animals are separate from us by invariable and eternal barriers; and it is a question here of an order of understanding and ideas that is specific to the human species, which emanates from its dignity, and constitutes it.

vii. The individual should address himself to the general will in order to find out to what extent he should be man, citizen, subject, father, child, and when it is suitable for him to live and to die. It is up to it to fix the limits of all duties. You have the most sacred ***natural right*** to all that is not contested you by the entire species. It alone will enlighten you about the nature of your thoughts and your desires. All that you will

conceive, all that you will meditate, will be good, great, elevated, sublime, if it is in the general and common interest. The only essential quality in your species is that which you demand in all your fellows for your happiness and for theirs. It is this conformity between you and all of them and between all of them and you that will indicate to you when you leave your species and when you remain in it. Do not ever lose it from view, since without it you will see the concepts of goodness, of justice, of humanity, of virtue, muddled in your understanding. Say often: I am a man, and I have no other genuinely inalienable ***natural rights*** than those of humanity.

viii. But you will say to me: "Where is this general will found? Where can I consult it?" In the written principles of Right of all civilized nations, in the social actions of savage and barbarian peoples, in the tacit conventions of the enemies of the human race amongst themselves; and even in indignation and resentment, the two passions that nature seems to have even given to animals to make up for the absence of social laws and public vengeance.

ix. If you therefore meditate carefully on all that preceeds, you will remain convinced: 1) that the man who only listens to his private will is the enemy of the human race; 2) that the general will is in each individual a pure act of the understanding which reasons in the silence of the passions on what man can require of his fellow and on what his fellow has the right to require of him; 3) that this consideration of the general will of the species and of the common desire is the rule of conduct relative to one private individual and another in the same society, to one private individual toward the society of which he is a member, and to the society of which he is a member toward other societies; 4) that submission to the general will is the bond of all societies, without even excepting those that are formed by crime. Alas! virtue is so beautiful that thieves respect its image even deep within their lairs.[2] 5) that laws should be made for all and not for one; otherwise this solitary being would resemble the violent reasoner whom we have stifled in paragraph v; 6) that since of two wills, the one general and the other private, it is the general will that never errs, it is not difficult to see the one to which it is necessary for the happiness of the human race that the legislative power belong and what veneration is owed to the august mortals whose private will unites both the authority and the infallibility of the general will; 7) that, even should one suppose the concept that species are in perpetual transformation, the nature of ***natural right*** would not change because it would always be relative to the general will and the common desire of the entire species; 8) that

equity is to justice as cause is to its effect, or that justice can not be anything other than declared equity; 9) finally, that all these consequences are evident for anyone who reasons, and anyone who does not wish to reason, renouncing the quality of being a man, should be treated as a denatured being.

Discourse on Political Economy

Encyclopedia (Volume V)

ECONOMY or OECONOMY, (Moral and Political.) This word comes from οικος, house, and νομος, law, and originally signified only the wise and legitimate government of the household for the common good of the whole family. The meaning of the term was subsequently extended to the government of the large family which is the state. In order to distinguish these two meanings, in the latter case it is called *general*, or *political, economy*, and in the former *domestic*, or *private, economy*. This article is concerned only with the first of these. Regarding *domestic economy*, see FATHER OF THE FAMILY.[1]

Even if there were as much similarity between the state and the family as several authors claim, it would not necessarily follow that the rules of conduct appropriate to one of these two societies were suited to the other.[2] They differ too much in size to be capable of being administered in the same way, and there will always be a very great difference between domestic government, where the father can see everything for himself, and civil government, where the leader sees almost nothing except through the eyes of others. For things to become equal in this respect, the talents, strength, and all the faculties of the father would have to increase in proportion to the size of his family, and the soul of a powerful monarch would have to be, compared to that of an ordinary man, what the extent of his empire is to the inheritance of a private individual.

But how could the government of the state be like that of the family, whose basis is so different? Because the father is physically stronger than his children, paternal power is with reason thought to be established by nature for as long as they need his help. In the large family, all of whose members are naturally equal, political authority—purely arbitrary as regards its institution—can be founded only on conventions, and the magistrate can command the others only by virtue of the laws.[3] The father's duties are dictated by natural feelings, and in a tone that rarely permits him to disobey. Leaders have no similar rule and are not really obligated to the people except for what they have promised to do, which the people has the right to require them to carry out. Another even more important difference is that since the children have nothing except what

they receive from the father, it is evident that all property rights belong to, or emanate from, him. It is just the opposite in the large family, where the general administration is established only in order to assure private property, which is antecedent to it. The main object of the entire household's work is to preserve and increase the father's patrimony, so that someday he can divide it among his children without impoverishing them; whereas the wealth of the public treasury is only a means, often very badly understood, to maintain private individuals in peace and plenty. In short, the small family is destined to die out and split up someday into several other similar families, whereas the large one is made to last always in the same state. The former must increase in order to multiply, whereas not only does it suffice for the latter to preserve itself, but it can easily be proved that all growth is more harmful than useful to it.

For several reasons derived from the nature of the thing, the father should command in the family.[4] First, the authority of the father and mother should not be equal; rather, there must be a single government, and when opinions are divided, there must be a dominant voice that decides. Second, however slight the incapacitations peculiar to the wife are assumed to be, since they are always an inactive period for her, this is sufficient reason to exclude her from this primacy, because when the balance is perfectly equal, a straw is enough to tip it. Furthermore, the husband should oversee his wife's conduct, because it is important to him to be assured that the children he is forced to recognize and nourish do not belong to anyone other than himself. The wife, who has no such thing to fear, does not have the same right over her husband. Third, children should obey their father, at first through necessity, later through gratitude. After having their needs met by him for half their lives, they should devote the other half to attending to his needs. Fourth, as regards domestic servants, they too owe him their services in return for the livelihood he gives them, unless they break the bargain when it no longer suits them. I do not speak for slavery, because it is contrary to nature and no right can authorize it.

Nothing of this kind exists in political society. Far from the leader's having a natural interest in the happiness of private individuals, it is not unusual for him to seek his own happiness in their misery. Is the magistracy hereditary? Often a child is in command of men. Is it elective? Elections present a thousand drawbacks. And in either case all the advantages of paternity are lost. If you have only one leader, you are at the discretion of a master who has no reason to love you. If you have several, you must simultaneously bear their tyranny and their dissensions. In short, abuses are inevitable and their consequences disastrous in all societies, where

the public interest and the laws have no natural force and are continuously assailed by the personal interest and passions of both leader and members.

Although the functions of the father of a family and of the first magistrate should be directed toward the same goal, the paths they take are so different, their duties and rights are so dissimilar, that one cannot confuse them without forming false ideas about the fundamental laws of society, and without making mistakes that are fatal to the human race. Indeed, while nature's voice is the best advice a father can heed to fulfill his duties, for the magistrate it is only a false guide, working continuously to separate him from his people, and bringing him sooner or later to his downfall or to that of the state unless he is restrained by the most sublime virtue. The only precaution necessary to the father of a family is to protect himself from depravity, and to prevent his natural inclinations from becoming corrupt, whereas it is these very inclinations which corrupt the magistrate. To act well, the former need only consult his heart; the latter becomes a traitor the moment he heeds his. Even his own reason should be suspect to him, and he should follow no other rule than the public reason, which is the law. Besides, nature has made a multitude of good fathers of families, but it is doubtful that since the beginning of the world, human wisdom has ever made ten men capable of governing their fellow men.

It follows from everything I have just set forth, that *public economy* is correctly distinguished from *private economy*, and that since the state has nothing in common with the family except the obligation of their leaders to make each of them happy, the same rules of conduct could not be suited to both.[5] I thought these few lines would suffice to reject the odious system that Sir Filmer tried to establish in a work entitled *Patriarcha*, which two famous men have already overly honored by writing books to refute it. Besides, this error is very old, since Aristotle himself saw fit to combat it with reasons that can be found in the first book of his *Politics*.[6]

I urge my readers also to distinguish carefully *public economy*, about which I am to speak, and which I call *government*, from the supreme authority, which I call *sovereignty*—a distinction that consists in the one having the legislative right and in certain cases obligating the body of the nation itself, while the other has only the executive power and can obligate only private individuals. *See* POLITICS and SOVEREIGNTY.[7]

Allow me to use for a moment a common comparison, imprecise in many ways, but suited to making myself better understood.

The body politic, taken individually, can be considered to be like a body that is organized, living, and similar to that of a man. The sovereign

power represents the head; the laws and customs are the brain, source of the nerves and seat of the understanding, will, and senses, of which the judges and magistrates are the organs; commerce, industry, and agriculture are the mouth and stomach that prepare the common subsistence; public finances are the blood that a wise *economy*, performing the functions of the heart, sends out to distribute nourishment and life throughout the body; the citizens are the body and members that make the machine move, live, and work, and that cannot be harmed in any part without promptly sending a painful response to the brain if the animal is in a state of health.

The life of both is the *self* common to the whole, the reciprocal sensitivity and internal correlation of all the parts. What happens if this communication ceases, if formal unity disappears and contiguous parts are related to one another only by their proximity? The man is dead or the state is dissolved.

The body politic is thus also a moral being that has a will; and this general will, which always tends toward the preservation and welfare of the whole and of each part, and which is the source of the laws, is—for all the members of the state in relation to themselves and to it—the rule of what is just and unjust. This truth, let me say in passing, shows how incorrectly many writers have treated as theft the cunning prescribed to Spartan children for obtaining their frugal meal, as if everything that is required by law could fail to be legitimate. *See* RIGHT, for the source of this great and luminous principle, which that article develops.[8]

It is important to note that this rule of justice, infallible in relation to all citizens, can be defective with foreigners. And the reason for this is evident. Then the will of the state, although general in relation to its members, is so no longer in relation to other states and their members, but becomes for them a private and individual will that has its rule of justice in the law of nature, which fits in equally well with the principle established. For then the large town of the world becomes the body politic, of which the law of nature is always the general will and the various states and peoples are merely individual members.

These same distinctions, applied to each political society and its members, give rise to the most universal and infallible rules by which to judge a good or bad government, and in general the morality of all human actions.

All political societies are composed of other, smaller societies of different types, each of which has its interests and maxims; but these societies that everyone perceives, because they have an external, authorized form, are not the only ones that really exist in the state. All the private

individuals united by a common interest constitute as many others, permanent or temporary, whose strength is no less real for being less apparent, and whose various relationships, well observed, are the genuine knowledge of morals. It is all these tacit or formal associations which modify in so many ways the appearance of the public will by the influence of their own. The will of these particular societies always has two relations: for the members of the association, it is a general will; for the large society, it is a private will, which is very often found to be upright in the first respect and vicious in the latter. A given man can be a pious priest, or a brave soldier, or a zealous lawyer, and a bad citizen. A given deliberation can be advantageous to the small community and pernicious to the large one. It is true that since particular societies are always subordinate to those that contain them, one ought to obey the latter in preference to the former; the citizen's duties take precedence over the senator's, and the man's over the citizen's. But unfortunately personal interest is always found in inverse ratio to duty, and it increases in proportion as the association becomes narrower and the engagement less sacred—invincible proof that the most general will is also always the most just, and that the voice of the people is in fact the voice of God.[9]

Even so, it does not follow that public deliberations are always equitable. They may not be so concerning foreign affairs; I have stated the reason for this. Thus it is not impossible for a well-governed republic to wage an unjust war. Nor is it impossible for the council of a democracy to pass bad decrees and condemn innocent men. But that will never happen unless the people is seduced by private interests that some wily men have been able to substitute for its own by influence and eloquence. Then the public deliberation will be one thing and the general will a completely different thing. Do not raise the democracy of Athens as an objection, then, because Athens was not in fact a democracy, but a highly tyrannical aristocracy, governed by learned men and orators.[10] Examine carefully what happens in any deliberation, and you will see that the general will is always in favor of the common good; but very often a secret split occurs, a tacit confederation, which causes the natural disposition of the assembly to be bypassed for the sake of private views. Then the social body really divides into other bodies whose members adopt a general will that is good and just with respect to these new bodies, unjust and bad with respect to the whole from which each of them has broken away.

This shows how easy it is, using these principles, to explain the apparent contradictions seen in the conduct of so many men who are full of scruple and honor in certain respects, deceitful and knavish in others; trampling underfoot the most sacred duties, yet faithful unto death to

engagements that are often illegitimate. Thus the most corrupt men always render some sort of homage to the public faith. Thus (as noted in the *article* RIGHT) even brigands who are the enemies of virtue in the large society worship its semblance in their lairs.[11]

In establishing the general will as the first principle of public *economy* and the fundamental rule of government, I did not believe it was necessary to examine seriously whether the magistrates belong to the people or the people to the magistrates, and whether in public affairs it is the good of the state or that of the leaders that should be consulted. This question was long ago resolved in one way by practice and in another by reason; and in general it would be sheer madness to hope that those who are in fact masters will prefer another interest to their own. It would be appropriate, therefore, to divide public *economy* further into popular and tyrannical. The former is that of all states in which the people and the leaders have the same interest and the same will. The other necessarily exists everywhere that the government and the people have different interests and consequently opposing wills. The maxims of the latter are inscribed all through the archives of history and in Machiavelli's satires.[12] The others are found only in the writings of philosophers who dare to demand the rights of humanity.

I. The first and most important maxim of legitimate or popular government—that is, one that has the good of the people as its object—is therefore, as I have said, to follow the general will in all matters. But in order to follow it, it must be known, and above all well distinguished from the private will, starting with one's own, a distinction that is always extremely difficult to make and on which only the most sublime virtue can shed sufficient light. Since it is necessary to be free in order to will, another difficulty, which is hardly lesser, is to assure both public freedom and the government's authority at the same time. Seek the motives that have brought men, united by their mutual needs in the large society, to unite more closely by means of civil societies. You will find none other than that of assuring the goods, life, and freedom of each member by the protection of all. But how can men be forced to defend the freedom of one among them without infringing on that of the others? And how can the public needs be met without altering the private property of those who are forced to contribute to it? Whatever sophisms may be used to disguise all this, it is certain that if someone can constrain my will, I am no longer free, and that I am no longer master of my goods if another can meddle with them. This difficulty,[13] which must have seemed insurmountable, was removed along with the first by the most sublime of all

human institutions, or rather by a celestial inspiration that taught man to imitate here on earth the immutable decrees of the divinity. By what inconceivable art could the means have been found to subjugate men in order to make them free; to use the goods, the labor, even the life of all its members in the service of the state without constraining and without consulting them; to bind their will with their own agreement; to make their consent predominate over their refusal; and to force them to punish themselves when they do what they did not want? How can it be that they obey and no one commands, that they serve and have no master, and are all the freer, in fact, because under what appears as subjugation, no one loses any of his freedom except what would harm the freedom of another. These marvels are the work of the law. It is to law alone that men owe justice and freedom. It is this healthy instrument of the will of all that reestablishes, as a right, the natural equality among men. It is this celestial voice that tells each citizen the precepts of public reason, and teaches him to act according to the maxims of his own judgment and not to be in contradiction with himself. It is also through the law alone that leaders must speak when they command; for as soon as a man claims to subject another to his private will independently of the laws, he immediately leaves the civil state, and in relation to the other man places himself in the pure state of nature, where obedience is never prescribed except by necessity.

The most pressing interest of the leader, as well as his most indispensable duty, is therefore to attend to the observation of the laws of which he is the minister and on which all his authority is based. If he must make others observe them, there is even greater reason for him to observe them himself, as the one who enjoys all their benefits. For his example is so powerful that even if the people would tolerate his emancipation from the yoke of the law, he ought to refrain from taking advantage of such a dangerous prerogative, which others would soon attempt to usurp in turn, and often to his detriment. At bottom, since all of society's engagements are reciprocal in nature, it is not possible to be above the law without renouncing its advantages, and no one owes anything to any person who claims he owes nothing to anyone. For the same reason, no exemption from the law will ever be accorded for any reason whatever in a well-regulated government. Even the citizens who most deserve something from the fatherland should be rewarded with honors and never with privileges. For the republic is on the brink of ruin as soon as someone can think it is a fine thing not to obey the laws. But if ever the nobility or the military or some other order within the state were to adopt such a maxim, all would be irretrievably lost.

The power of laws depends even more on their own wisdom than on the severity of their ministers, and the public will derives its greatest influence from the reason that dictated it. It is because of this that Plato considers it a very important precaution always to place at the head of edicts a well-reasoned preamble which shows their justice and utility.[14] Indeed, the first of the laws is to respect the laws. Severity of punishments is merely a vain expedient thought up by small minds in order to substitute terror for the respect they can't obtain. It has always been noted that the countries where corporal punishments are most terrible are also those where they are most frequent; so that the cruelty of penalties is hardly anything except a sign of the multitude of lawbreakers, and when all are punished with equal severity, the guilty are forced to commit crimes to escape punishment for their mistakes.

But although the government is not the master of the law, it is no small thing to be its guarantor and to dispose of a thousand ways of making it beloved. The talent of reigning consists of nothing else. When one has force in hand, there is no art to making everyone tremble, and not even very much to winning men's hearts; for experience has long taught the people to be very grateful to its leaders for all the evil they do not do to it, and to worship its leaders when not hated by them. An imbecile who is obeyed can, like anyone else, punish crimes. The genuine statesman knows how to prevent them. He extends his respectable dominion over wills even more than over actions. If he could obtain a situation in which everyone acted well, he himself would have nothing further to do, and the masterpiece of his works would be to be able to remain idle. It is certain, at least, that the greatest talent of leaders is to disguise their power to make it less odious, and to manage the state so peacefully that it seems to have no need for managers.

Therefore, I conclude that just as the legislator's first duty is to make the laws conform to the general will, the first rule of public *economy* is for the administration to be in conformity with the laws. This will even be sufficient for the state not to be badly governed, if the legislator has attended as he should to all that is required by the location, climate, soil, morals, surroundings, and all the particular relationships of the people he was to institute.[15] Not that there do not still remain an infinite number of administrative and *economic* details left to the wisdom of the government. But it always has two infallible rules for acting correctly on those occasions. One is the spirit of the law, which should help in deciding cases that the law could not foresee. The other is the general will, source and supplement of all the laws, and which should always be consulted when they are lacking. How, I will be asked, can the general will be

known in cases where it has not expressed itself? Must the whole nation be assembled at each unforeseen event? Such an assembly is all the less necessary because it is not sure its decision would be the expression of the general will; because this means is impractical for a large people; and because it is rarely necessary when the government is well intentioned.[16] For the leaders know very well that the general will is always for the side most favorable to the public interest—that is, for the most equitable; so that it is only necessary to be just and one is assured of following the general will. Often, when it is too openly offended, it lets itself be seen despite the terrible restraint of the public authority. I look as near at hand as I can for examples to follow in such a case. In China, the prince follows an unwavering maxim of blaming his officers in all disputes that arise between them and the people. Is bread expensive in one province? The intendant is put in prison. Is there rioting in another? The governor is demoted, and each mandarin answers with his head for all the trouble that occurs in his department. Not that the affair is not later examined in a regular trial: but long experience has made it possible to anticipate the verdict. There is rarely any injustice to remedy in this; and the emperor, persuaded that public clamor never arises without cause, always discerns among the seditious cries that he punishes, some just grievances that he rectifies.

It is no small thing to have brought order and peace to all the parts of the republic; it is no small thing that the state is tranquil and the law respected. But if one does nothing more, all this will be more apparent than real, and the government will have difficulty making itself obeyed if it limits itself to obedience. If it is good to know how to use men as they are, it is better still to make them what one needs them to be. The most absolute authority is that which penetrates to the inner man and is exerted no less on his will than on his actions. It is certain that people are in the long run what the government makes them. Warriors, citizens, men when it wishes; mob and rabble when it so pleases. And every prince who scorns his subjects dishonors himself by showing that he did not know how to make them worthy of esteem. Form men, therefore, if you want to command men. If you want the laws to be obeyed, make them beloved, so that for men to do what they should, they need only think they ought to do it. That was the great art of the governments of antiquity, in those remote times when philosophers gave laws to peoples, and only used their authority to make them wise and happy. From this came the many sumptuary laws, the many regulations concerning morals, the many public maxims accepted or rejected with the greatest care. Even tyrants did not forget this important part of administration, and they

gave as much careful attention to corrupting the morals of their slaves as did the magistrates to correcting those of their fellow citizens. But our modern governments, which think they have done all there is to do when they have collected money, don't even imagine that it is either necessary or possible to go that far.

II. The second essential rule of public *economy* is no less important than the first. Do you want the general will to be fulfilled? Make sure that all private wills are related to it; and since virtue is only this conformity of the private will to the general, to say the same thing briefly, make virtue reign.[17]

If political thinkers were less blinded by their ambition, they would see how impossible it is for any establishment whatever to function in the spirit of its institution if it is not directed in accordance with the law of duty. They would feel that the greatest wellspring of public authority lies in the hearts of the citizens, and that for the maintenance of the government, nothing can replace good morals. Not only is it worthy people alone who know how to administer laws, but basically it is only decent people who know how to obey them. Anyone who manages to defy remorse will not long delay in defying corporal punishment, which is a less rigorous and less continuous chastisement and one from which there is at least the hope of escaping. And whatever precautions are taken, those who are only waiting for impunity to do evil, will hardly lack means of eluding the law or escaping a penalty. Then, since all the private interests combine against the general interest which is no longer that of anyone, public vices have more force to weaken the laws than the laws have to repress vices. And the corruption of the people and leaders finally extends to the government, however wise it may be. The worst of all abuses is to obey the laws in appearance only to break them in fact with safety. Soon the best laws become the most pernicious. It would be a hundred times better if they did not exist; it would be a resource that one would still have when no others remain. In such a situation, it is useless to add edicts upon edicts, regulations upon regulations. All that merely serves to introduce other abuses without correcting those that already exist. The more you multiply laws, the more contemptible you make them; and all the overseers you institute are merely new lawbreakers destined to share with the old ones or do their plundering separately. Soon the price of virtue becomes that of brigandage. The vilest men are the best accredited. The greater they are, the more contemptible they are. Their infamy manifests itself in their dignities, and they are dishonored by their honors. If they buy the votes of leaders or the pro-

tection of women, it is so they themselves can sell justice, duty, and the state. And the people, who does not see that its own vices are the primary cause of its misfortunes, mutters and cries in despair, "All my ills come only from those whom I pay to protect me."

Then, in place of the voice of duty that no longer speaks in men's hearts, leaders are forced to substitute the cry of terror or the lure of an apparent interest by which they deceive their creatures. Then there must be recourse to all the small, despicable tricks they call *maxims of state* and *cabinet secrets*. All the vigor that remains in the government is used by its members to ruin and replace each other, while business matters remain neglected or are taken up only as personal interest demands and according to its direction. Finally, the whole skill of these great political thinkers is so to hypnotize those whose help they need that each person believes he is working for his own interest while working for *theirs*. I say theirs if indeed it is in fact the genuine interest of leaders to annihilate the people in order to subject it, and to ruin their own good in order to secure possession of it.

But when citizens love their duty, and when the trustees of public authority sincerely apply themselves to nourishing this love through their example and by their efforts, all difficulties vanish and administration becomes so easy that it can do without that shady art whose baseness produces all of its secrecy. Those ambitious minds, so dangerous and so admired, all those great ministers whose glory is combined with the people's misfortunes, are no longer missed. Good public morals replace the genius of leaders. And the more virtue reigns, the less necessary are talents. Ambition itself is better served by duty than by usurpation. The people, convinced that its leaders work only for its happiness, spares them by its deference from working to strengthen their power; and history shows us in a thousand places that the authority the people accords to those it loves and by whom it is beloved, is a hundred times more absolute than all the tyranny of usurpers. This does not mean that the government ought to fear using its power, but rather that it should only use it in a legitimate manner. History provides a thousand examples of ambitious or pusillanimous leaders, who have been lost through softness or pride, but none of someone who fared badly because he was only equitable. But negligence should not be confused with moderation, nor gentleness with weakness. To be just, it is necessary to be severe. Tolerating wickedness that one has the right and the power to repress is being wicked oneself.[18]

It is not enough to say to citizens, be good. It is necessary to teach them to be so, and example itself, which is the first lesson in this regard,

is not the only means that must be used. Love of fatherland is the most effective, for as I have already said, every man is virtuous when his private will conforms on all matters with the general will, and we willingly want what is wanted by the people we love.

It seems that the feeling of humanity evaporates and weakens as it is extended over the whole world, and that we can't be moved by calamities in Tartary or Japan as we are by those of a European people. Interest and commiseration must in some way be confined and compressed to be activated. Now since this inclination in us can only be useful to those with whom we have to live, it is good that the feeling of humanity, concentrated among fellow citizens, gains fresh force through the habit of seeing one another and through the common interest that unites them. It is certain that the greatest miracles of virtue have been produced by love of fatherland. By combining the force of amour-propre with all the beauty of virtue, this sweet and ardent feeling gains an energy which, without disfiguring it, makes it the most heroic of all the passions. It produced the many immortal actions whose splendor dazzles our weak eyes, and the many great men whose antique virtues have been thought to be fables ever since love of fatherland has been turned to derision. We should not be surprised by this. The ecstasies of tender hearts appear as so many chimeras to anyone who has not felt them. And love of the fatherland, a hundred times more ardent and delightful than that of a mistress, likewise cannot be conceived except by being experienced. But it is easy to notice, in all hearts that are inflamed by it and in all the actions it inspires, that fiery and sublime ardor which the purest virtue lacks when separated from this love. Let us dare to compare Socrates himself to Cato. One was more a philosopher, the other more a citizen. Athens was already lost, and Socrates had no fatherland other than the whole world. Cato always carried his fatherland in the bottom of his heart; he lived for it alone and could not outlive it. Socrates' virtue is that of the wisest of men. But compared to Caesar and Pompey, Cato seems like a God among mortals. One teaches a few private individuals, combats the sophists, and dies for the truth; the other defends the state, freedom, and the laws against the conquerors of the world, and finally takes leave of the earth when he no longer sees any fatherland to serve.[19] A worthy student of Socrates would be the most virtuous of his contemporaries; a worthy emulator of Cato would be the greatest. The former's own virtue would constitute his happiness; the latter would seek his happiness in that of all others. We would be taught by one, but led by the other, and that alone would determine our preference. For a people of wise men has never been formed, but it is not impossible to make a people happy.

Do we want peoples to be virtuous? Let us then start by making them love their fatherland. But how are they to love it if the fatherland is nothing more for them than for foreigners, and accords them only what it cannot refuse to anyone? The problem would be still worse if they did not even enjoy civil safety there, and if their goods, life, or freedom were at the discretion of powerful men, without its being either possible or permitted for them to dare invoke the laws. Then, subjected to the duties of the civil state without even enjoying the rights of the state of nature and without being able to use their strength to defend themselves, they would consequently be in the worst possible condition for free men, and the word *fatherland* could have only an odious or ridiculous meaning for them. It is not credible that an arm can be harmed or cut off without pain being transmitted to the head. And it is no more credible that the general will would allow any member of the state, whoever he might be, to injure or destroy another, than it is that the fingers of a man using his reason would put out his own eyes. Private safety is so closely connected to the public confederation that were it not for the consideration owed to human weakness, this convention would be dissolved by right if a single citizen perished who could have been saved; if a single one were wrongly held in prison; and if a single suit were lost due to evident injustice. For when the fundamental conventions are violated, one can no longer see what right or what interest could maintain the people in the social union, unless it is restrained by force alone, in which case the civil state is dissolved.

Indeed, isn't the body of the nation under an engagement to provide for the preservation of the humblest of its members with as much care as for all the others? And is the safety of a citizen any less the common cause than that of the whole state? If someone tells us it is good that a single man should perish for all, I shall admire this adage from the lips of a worthy and virtuous patriot who consecrates himself willingly and out of duty to die for the safety of his country. But if this means that the government is allowed to sacrifice an innocent man for the safety of the multitude, I hold this maxim to be one of the most execrable that tyranny ever invented, the most false that might be proposed, the most dangerous that might be accepted, and the most directly opposed to the fundamental laws of society.[20] Rather than that one ought to perish for all, all have engaged their goods and their lives for the defense of each one among them, in order that private weakness always be protected by public force, and each member by the whole state. After conjecturing the subtraction of one individual after another from the people, urge the partisans of this maxim to explain more clearly what they mean by *the body of the state*,

and you will see that they finally reduce it to a small number of men who are not the people, but the officers of the people, and who, having obligated themselves by a personal oath to perish for its safety, claim to prove thereby that it is the people who ought to perish for theirs.

Do you want to find examples of the protection that the state owes to its members, and of the respect it owes to their persons? These must be sought only in the most illustrious and courageous nations on earth, and there are scarcely any except free peoples who know the worth of a man. It is known how great the perplexity of the entire republic was in Sparta when a matter of punishing a guilty citizen arose. In Macedonia, the life of a man was such an important matter that even in all his greatness, Alexander—that powerful monarch—would not have dared to put a criminal Macedonian to death in cold blood unless the accused had appeared to defend himself before his fellow citizens and had been condemned by them. But the Romans stood out over all the peoples of the earth for the deference of the government toward private individuals and for its scrupulous attention to respecting the inviolable rights of all members of the state. Nothing was as sacred as the life of the simple citizens. No less than the assembly of the entire people was necessary to condemn one of them. Neither the senate itself nor the consuls in all their majesty had the right to do this; and among the world's most powerful people, the crime and punishment of a citizen was a public desolation. It also appeared so harsh to shed blood for any crime whatever, that by the law *Porcia*, the death penalty was commuted to exile for those who would want to outlive the loss of such a sweet fatherland. In Rome and in the armies, everything breathed that love of the citizens for one another and that respect for the name Roman which aroused the courage and animated the virtue of anyone who had the honor to bear it. The hat of a citizen freed from slavery or the civic crown of one who had saved another's life were the things viewed with the greatest pleasure among the pomp of victory celebrations. And it is notable that of the crowns used in war to honor noble actions, only the civic crown and that of the victors were made of grass and leaves; all the others were merely gold. Thus was Rome virtuous, and became the mistress of the world. Ambitious leaders! A shepherd governs his dogs and his flocks, yet he is the humblest of men. If it is fine to command, it is when those who obey us can do us honor. Therefore, respect your fellow citizens, and you will make yourselves respectable. Respect freedom, and your power will be increased daily. Never exceed your rights, and soon they will be limitless.

Let the fatherland, then, be the common mother of the citizens; let the advantages they enjoy in their country endear it to them; let the

government leave a large enough share of the public administration to them so that they feel at home; and let the laws be in their sight only guarantees of the common freedom. These rights, noble as they are, belong to all men. But without appearing to attack them directly, the bad will of leaders easily reduces their effect to zero. Law that is abused serves the powerful simultaneously as an offensive weapon and as a shield against the weak, and the pretext of the public good is always the most dangerous scourge of the people. What is most necessary and perhaps most difficult in the government is rigorous integrity in providing justice for all, and especially protecting the poor against the tyranny of the rich. The greatest harm is already done when there are poor people to protect and rich ones to restrain. It is only on moderate wealth that the full force of the laws is exerted. Laws are equally powerless against the treasures of the rich and against the indigence of the poor; the first eludes them, the second escapes them; one breaks the net and the other slips through.

It is, therefore, one of the government's most important tasks to prevent extreme inequality of wealth, not by taking treasures away from those who possess them, but by removing the means of accumulating them from everyone; nor by building poorhouses, but by protecting citizens from becoming poor. People unequally distributed over the territory and crowded into one place while others become depopulated; arts of pleasure and pure invention favored at the expense of useful and difficult trades; agriculture sacrificed to commerce; the tax-farmer made necessary by bad administration of the state revenues; venality, finally, pushed to such excess that reputation is measured in coin and the virtues themselves are sold for money: these are the most tangible causes of opulence and indigence, of the substitution of private interest for the public interest, of the mutual hate of citizens, of their indifference to the common cause, of the corruption of the people, and of the weakening of all the mechanisms of the government. Such are, consequently, the evils that are hard to cure once they make themselves felt, but which a wise administration should prevent in order to maintain, along with good morals, respect for the laws, love of fatherland, and a vigorous general will.

But all these precautions will be insufficient without going still further. I end this part of the public *economy* where I ought to have started it. The fatherland cannot subsist without freedom, nor freedom without virtue, nor virtue without citizens. You will have all these if you form citizens; without doing so, you will have only wicked slaves, beginning with the leaders of the state. Now, forming citizens is not accomplished in a day, and to have them as men they must be taught as children. Someone may tell me that anyone who has men to govern should not seek,

outside of their nature, a perfection of which they are not capable; that he should not want to destroy their passions, and that the execution of such a project would not be any more desirable than it is possible. I will agree the more strongly with all this because a man who had no passions would certainly be a very bad citizen. But it must also be agreed that although men cannot be taught to love nothing, it is not impossible to teach them to love one object rather than another, and what is truly beautiful rather than what is deformed. If, for example, they are trained early enough never to consider their persons except as related to the body of the State, and not to perceive their own existence, so to speak, except as part of the state's, they will eventually come to identify themselves in some way with this larger whole; to feel themselves to be members of the fatherland; to love it with that delicate feeling that any isolated man feels only for himself; to elevate their soul perpetually toward this great object; and thereby to transform into a sublime virtue this dangerous disposition from which all our vices arise. Not only does Philosophy demonstrate the possibility of these new directions, but History provides a thousand stunning examples. If they are so rare among us, it is because no one cares whether there are any citizens, and still less does anyone think of doing something early enough to form them. It is too late to change our natural inclinations when they have become entrenched, and habit has been combined with amour-propre. It is too late to draw us out of our ourselves once the ***human self*** concentrated in our hearts has acquired that contemptible activity that aborbs all virtue and constitutes the life of petty souls. How could love of fatherland develop in the midst of so many other passions stifling it? And what is left for fellow citizens of a heart already divided among greed, a mistress, and vanity?

It is from the first moment of life that one must learn to deserve to live; and since one shares the rights of citizens at birth, the instant of our birth should be the beginning of the performance of our duties. If there are laws for maturity, there should be some for childhood that teach obedience to others. And as each man's reason is not allowed to be the unique arbiter of his duties, it is even less appropriate to abandon the education of children to the enlightenment and prejudices of their fathers in that it matters even more to the state than to fathers. For according to the natural course of events, the father's death often deprives him of the final fruits of this education, but the fatherland sooner or later feels its effects; the state remains, and the family is dissolved. And if the public authority, by assuming the fathers' place and taking charge of this important function, acquires their rights by fulfilling their duties, the fathers have all the less cause for complaint because in this regard they are

actually only changing name, and will have in common, under the name citizens, the same authority over their children that they exercised separately under the name *fathers*, and will be no less well obeyed when they speak in the name of the law than they were when they spoke in the name of nature. Public education, under rules prescribed by the government and magistrates established by the sovereign, is therefore one of the fundamental maxims of popular or legitimate government. If children are raised in common in the midst of equality, if they are imbued with the laws of the state and the maxims of the general will, if they are taught to respect them above all things, if they are surrounded by examples and objects that constantly remind them of the tender mother who nourishes them, her love for them, the inestimable benefits they receive from her, and what they owe in return, there can be no doubt that they will learn from this to love one another as brothers, never to want anything except what the society wants, to substitute the actions of men and citizens for the sterile, empty babble of sophists, and one day to become the defenders and fathers of the fatherland whose children they will have been for so long.

I shall not discuss the magistrates destined to preside over this education, which is certainly the state's most important business. It is apparent that if such marks of public confidence were lightly accorded, if this sublime function were not—for those who had worthily fulfilled all the others—the reward for their labors, the honorable and sweet repose of their old age, and the height of all honors, the whole undertaking would be useless, and the education unsuccessful. For everywhere that lesson is not supported by authority and precept by example, teaching is fruitless, and virtue itself loses its credit in the mouth of one who does not practice it. But when illustrious warriors, bent by the weight of their laurels, preach courage; when upright magistrates, grown gray in dignity and at the tribunals, teach justice; all of them will train their virtuous successors, and will transmit from age to age to the generations that follow the experience and talents of leaders, the courage and virtue of citizens, and the emulation common to all of living and dying for the fatherland.

I know of only three peoples who in former times practiced public education: namely the Cretans, the Lacedemonians, and the ancient Persians. Among all three it was the greatest success, and produced marvels among the latter two. When the world became divided into nations too large to be well governed, this method was no longer practicable; and other reasons that the reader can easily see have also prevented its being tried by any modern people. It is a very remarkable thing that the Romans could do without it; but Rome was for five hundred years a con-

tinual miracle that the world ought not to hope to see again. The Romans' virtue, engendered by a horror of tyranny and the crimes of tyrants and by innate love of fatherland, turned all their homes into as many schools for citizens; and the unlimited power of fathers over their children placed so much severity in the private domain that the father—more feared than magistrates—was the censor of morals and avenger of the laws in his domestic tribunal[21]

In this way, an attentive and well-intentioned government, ceaselessly careful to maintain or revive love of fatherland and good morals among the people, prevents from afar the evils that sooner or later result from the indifference of citizens concerning the fate of the republic, and confines within narrow limits that personal interest which so isolates private individuals that the state is weakened by their power and cannot hope to gain anything from their goodwill. Wherever the people loves its country, respects the laws, and lives simply, little else remains to do to make it happy; and in public administration, where fortune plays less of a role than in the fate of private individuals, wisdom is so close to happiness that these two objects are indistinguishable.

III. It is not enough to have citizens and protect them; it is also necessary to think about their subsistence. And providing for the public needs is an evident consequence of the general will and third essential duty of the government. This duty is not, it should be apparent, to fill the granaries of private individuals and dispense them from working, but rather to maintain abundance within their reach so that to acquire it, work is always necessary and never useless. It also extends to all the operations concerning the maintenance of the public treasury and the expenses of the public administration. Thus, after discussing the general *economy* in relation to the government of persons, it remains for us to consider it in relation to administration of goods.

This part offers no fewer difficulties to resolve or contradictions to overcome than the preceding one. It is certain that the right of property is the most sacred of all the rights of citizens, and more important in certain respects than freedom itself, either because it is more closely connected with the preservation of life, or because, since goods are easier to usurp and more difficult to protect than one's person, greater respect should be accorded to what can more easily be stolen, or finally because property is the true basis of civil society and the true guarantee of the citizens' engagements. For if goods were not held accountable for persons, nothing would be so easy as to elude one's duties and scoff at the laws. On the other hand, it is no less certain that the maintenance of the

state and the government requires costs and expenses. And since anyone who grants the end cannot refuse the means, it follows that the members of the society should contribute some of their goods to its upkeep. Moreover it is difficult to assure the property of private individuals on the one hand without attacking it on the other, and it is not possible for all the regulations concerning inheritance, wills, and contracts not to constrain the citizens in certain respects regarding the disposition of their own goods, and consequently regarding their right of property.

But besides what I have already said about the harmony that prevails between the authority of the law and the freedom of the citizens, there is, in relation to the disposition of goods, one important remark to be made that overcomes many difficulties. It is, as Pufendorf has shown, that by the nature of the right of property, it does not extend beyond the life of the proprietor, and that the instant a man is dead, his goods no longer belong to him.[22] Thus prescribing to him the conditions under which he can dispose of them, although in appearance an impairment of his right, is in fact an extension of it.

In general, although the institution of the laws that regulate the power of private individuals in disposing of their own goods belongs to the sovereign alone, the spirit of these laws, which the government should follow in applying them, is that from father to son and kin to kin, the family's goods should leave the family and be alienated as little as possible. There is an obvious reason for this in favor of children, for whom the right of property would be quite useless if their father left them nothing, and who, moreover, having often contributed by their labor to the acquisition of the father's goods, are in their own name associated with his right. But another reason, more remote yet not less important, is that nothing is more pernicious for morals and for the republic than continual changes of status and fortune among the citizens—changes that are the proof and the source of a thousand disorders, that upset and confuse everything, and due to which, since those who have been raised for one thing find themselves destined for another, neither those who rise nor those who fall can adopt the maxims or enlightenment suited to their new status, much less fulfill its duties. I turn now to the topic of public finances.

If the people governed itself and there were nothing intermediary between the administration of the state and the citizens, they would only have to pay their shares as the occasion arose in proportion to the public needs and the capacities of private individuals. And since no one would ever lose sight of the collection or use of state revenues, neither fraud nor abuse could slip into their handling. The state would never be encum-

bered by debts, nor the people overwhelmed by taxes; or at least the assurance of its proper use would console the people for the hardship of the taxation. But things cannot be thus, and however limited a state may be, its civil society is always too numerous to be able to be governed by all its members. The public revenues must necessarily pass through the hands of the leaders who, besides the interest of the state, all have their private interest, which is not the last to be heeded. On the other hand, the people, perceiving the greediness of leaders and their extravagant expenses rather than the public needs, protests at being divested of necessities to provide superfluities for others. And once these maneuvers have embittered it to a certain degree, the most upright administration could not succeed in reestablishing confidence. Then if contributions are voluntary, they are unproductive; if they are forced, they are illegitimate; and the difficulty of a just and wise *economy* lies in the cruel alternative of letting the state perish or attacking the sacred right of property which is its mainstay.

The first thing that the founder of a republic ought to do after the establishment of the laws is to find capital sufficient for the upkeep of the magistrates and other officers, and for all public expenses. This capital is called *aerarium*, or the *public treasury*, if it is in money; the *public domain* if it is in land; and the latter is much preferable to the former for obvious reasons. Anyone who has given this matter enough thought can hardly have any other opinion than that of Bodin, who views public domain as the most honest and safe of all means of providing for the state's needs.[23] And it is notable that Romulus's first care in the division of land was to designate a third of it for this purpose. I admit that it is not impossible for the proceeds of a badly administered public domain to be reduced to nothing; but it is not of the essence of public domain to be badly administered.

Prior to any use of it, this capital ought to be assigned or accepted by the assembly of the people or estates of the country, which should then determine its use. After this solemn ceremony which renders this capital inalienable, it changes its nature, so to speak, and its revenues become so sacred that diverting the smallest thing to the detriment of its purpose is not only the most infamous of all thefts, but a crime of high treason. It is a great dishonor for Rome that the integrity of the quaestor Cato was openly discussed, and that an Emperor rewarding a singer's talent with a few coins had to add that the money came from his family's goods and not from the state's. But if there are few men like Galba, where will we find Catos? And once vice is no longer a dishonor, what leaders will be scrupulous enough to abstain from touching the public revenues left to

their discretion, and not soon deceive even themselves by pretending to confuse their vain and scandalous dissipations with the glory of the state, and the means of extending their authority with those of increasing its power? It is above all in this delicate part of administration that virtue is the only effective instrument and that the magistrate's integrity is the only check capable of restraining his greed. The books and all the records of administrators serve less to reveal their infidelities than to cover them up; and prudence is never as quick to think up new precautions as is knavery to elude them. Therefore forget registers and papers, and place the finances in faithful hands; it is the only way to have them faithfully administered.

Once the public capital is established, the leaders of the state are by right its administrators; for this administration is a part of the government, always essential, although not always equally so. Its influence increases in proportion as that of other mechanisms diminishes, and it can be said that a government has reached the final degree of corruption when the only thing left of its vitality is money. Now since all governments tend continually to weaken, this reason alone shows why no state can subsist if its revenues do not increase constantly.

The first feeling of the necessity for this increase is also the first sign of internal disorder in the state. And the wise administrator, as he thinks of finding money to meet the present need, doesn't neglect to seek the ultimate cause of this new need, just as a sailor seeing water flood his ship doesn't forget, as he gets the pump into action, to find and plug the leak as well.

From this rule flows the most important maxim of the administration of finances, which is to work much more carefully to prevent needs than to increase revenues. However diligent one is, help that comes only after the harm is done, and more slowly, always leaves the state in distress. While the remedy for one difficulty is being worked out, another is already being felt, and the resources themselves produce new difficulties. So that in the end the nation is overwhelmed with debts, the people is downtrodden, the government loses all its vigor, and it no longer does much of anything with a great deal of money. I believe it was this great maxim, when well established, that gave rise to the marvels of the governments of antiquity, which did more with parsimony than ours with all their treasures. And it is from this, perhaps, that the common meaning of the word *economy* is derived, referring more to the wise handling of what one has than to the means of acquiring what one does not have.

Independently of the public domain which yields to the state in proportion to the probity of those who administer it, if one had sufficient

knowledge of the whole force of the general administration, especially when it is limited to legitimate means, one would be amazed at the resources leaders have for anticipating all public needs without touching the goods of private individuals. As they are the masters of all the state's commerce, nothing is easier for them than to direct it in a manner that provides for everything, often without appearing to meddle in it. The distribution of foodstuffs, money, and merchandise in just proportions according to time and place is the true secret of finances, and the source of their abundance, provided that those who administer them know how to project their views far enough in advance and on occasion accept an apparent and proximate loss in order actually to obtain immense profits at a future time. When one sees a government pay subsidies, rather than to be paid, for the exportation of wheat in years of plenty and for its importation in years of scarcity, one needs to have such facts before one's eyes to think them genuine; and they would be treated as pure fiction if they had occurred long ago. Suppose that to prevent scarcity in bad years, the establishment of public storehouses was proposed. In many countries wouldn't the upkeep of such a useful establishment serve as the pretext for new taxes? In Geneva, such granaries—established and maintained by a wise administration—provide a public resource in bad years and the principal revenue of the state at all times. *Alit et Ditat*[24] is the noble and just inscription one reads on the facade of the building. In order to present here the economic system of a good government, I have often looked toward the system of that republic, happy thus to find in my fatherland the example of wisdom and happiness I would like to see prevail in all countries.

If one examines how the needs of a state grow, this will often be found to happen in about the same way as it does for private individuals, less by genuine necessity than by an expansion of useless desires, and often expenses are increased solely to provide a pretext for increasing income. Thus the state would sometimes profit from dispensing with being rich, and such apparent wealth is basically a greater burden than poverty itself would be. There may be the hope, it is true, of holding peoples in stricter dependence by giving them with one hand what has been taken away from them with the other; and this was the policy Joseph used with the Egyptians. But this vain sophism is all the more fatal to the state in that the money does not return to the same hands from which it came, and that maxims of this sort only enrich idlers with spoils taken from useful men.

The taste for conquests is one of the most tangible and dangerous causes of this increase in needs. This taste, often engendered by another type of ambition than the one it seems to represent, is not always what

it appears to be; and its genuine motive is not so much the apparent desire for the growth of the nation as the hidden desire to increase the internal authority of the leaders, with the help of an increased number of troops and by means of the diversion that the war's objectives create in the minds of the citizens.

What is at least very certain is that nothing is as downtrodden or miserable as conquering peoples, and even their successes only increase their miseries. Even if history did not teach us so, reason would be enough to show us that the larger the state, the heavier and more burdensome, in proportion, will become its expenses. For all the provinces must furnish their quota of the expenses of the general administration, and beyond that each province must spend the same amount for its own particular administration as if it were independent. Add the fact that all fortunes are made in one place and consumed in another, which soon breaks the equilibrium between what is produced and what is consumed, and impoverishes a great deal of countryside in order to enrich a single town.

Another source of the increase of public needs is related to the preceding one. A time may come when the citizens, no longer considering themselves interested in the common cause, would cease to be the defenders of the fatherland, and when magistrates would prefer to command mercenaries rather than free men, if only in order to use the former at the expedient time and place to subjugate the latter all the better. Such was the state of Rome at the end of the Republic and under the Emperors. For all the victories of the first Romans, like those of Alexander, had been won by brave citizens who knew how to shed blood for the fatherland if necessary, but who never sold it.[25] Marius was the first, in the war of Jugurtha, who dishonored the legions by introducing freedmen, vagabonds, and other mercenaries. Having become enemies of the peoples for whose happiness they were responsible, tyrants established standing armies, in appearance to hold back foreigners and in fact to oppress the inhabitants. In order to raise these armies, it was necessary to take farmers away from the land, so that the lack of farmers lowered the quantity of foodstuffs and the cost of maintaining them introduced taxes that increased food prices. This first disorder caused the people to protest. To repress them it was necessary to multiply the troops, and consequently indigence. And the more despair increased, the more necessary it was to increase it further to prevent its effects. On the other hand, these mercenaries, whose worth could be estimated by the price at which they sold themselves, were proud of their debasement, scorned the laws by which they were protected and their brothers whose bread they ate, and thought it more honorable to be Caesar's satellites than Rome's defend-

ers. Committed to blind obedience, their job was to hold a dagger over their fellow citizens, ready to murder all at the first signal. It would not be difficult to show that this was one of the main causes of the ruin of the Roman Empire.

The invention of artillery and fortifications has, in our times, forced the sovereigns of Europe to reestablish the use of standing armies to defend their fortresses. But although the motives are more legitimate, it is to be feared that the effect will be equally pernicious. It is no less necessary to depopulate the countryside to raise armies and set up garrisons. To maintain them, it is no less necessary to oppress the peoples. And in recent times, these dangerous establishments have been growing so rapidly in all our countries that one can foresee only the future depopulation of Europe and, sooner or later, the ruin of the peoples who inhabit it.

However this may be, it should be apparent that such institutions necessarily upset the true economic system, which derives the principal revenue of the state from the public domain, and leave only the unfortunate resource of subsidies and taxes, which remain for me to discuss.

It is necessary to remember, at this point, that the basis of the social compact is property, and its first condition that each person continue in the peaceful enjoyment of what belongs to him. It is true that by the same treaty, each person obligates himself, at least tacitly, to pay his share of the public needs. But since this engagement cannot undermine the fundamental law and supposes that the taxpayers acknowledge the evidence of need, it is apparent that in order to be legitimate, this payment ought to be made willingly. Not through a private will, as if it were necessary to have each citizen's consent and he only ought to provide what he pleases—which would be directly contrary to the spirit of the confederation—but through a general will, by majority vote, and based on proportional rates that leave no room for an arbitrary assessment of taxes.

This truth—that taxes cannot be legitimately established except by the consent of the people or its representatives—has been generally acknowledged by all the philosophers and jurists who have acquired any reputation in matters of political right, including Bodin himself.[26] While a few have established maxims that appear contrary, aside from the fact that it is easy to see the private motives that inspired them to do so, they attach so many conditions and restrictions that it all comes down to exactly the same thing. For whether the people can refuse or the sovereign should not require is indifferent in terms of right. And if it is only a question of force, it is completely useless to examine what is or is not legitimate.

The contributions levied from the people are of two kinds: some on property, which are collected on the basis of things, and others personal, which are paid by the head. Both are given the names *taxes* or *subsidies*. When the people sets the total amount it gives, it is called a *subsidy*; when it gives all the proceeds of a form of taxation, it is called a *tax*. In the book *The Spirit of the Laws*, one finds that assessment by head is more in keeping with servitude, and property taxation more suited to freedom.[27] That would be incontestable if all shares by head were equal; for nothing would be more disproportionate than such taxation, and the spirit of freedom consists above all in the precise respecting of proportions. But if taxation by head is exactly proportionate to the means of private individuals, as the French *capitation* could be, and thus has simultaneously both a property and a personal basis, it is the most equitable and consequently the most suited to free men. At first these proportions appear very easy to observe, because being relative to each person's status in the world, the indications are always public. But besides the fact that greed, reputation, and fraud know how to leave no overt traces, it is rare that all the elements that should be included in these calculations are taken into account. First, one should consider the relationship of quantities, according to which—all other things being equal—someone who has ten times more goods than another should pay ten times more. Second, the relationship of use, that is the distinction between the necessary and the superfluous. Someone who has only the bare necessities should pay nothing at all; taxation on someone who has superfluities can, if need be, approach the totality of what exceeds his necessities. To this he will reply that considering his rank, what would be superfluous for an inferior man is necessary for him. But this is a lie. For a Nobleman has two legs just like a cowherd, and has only one stomach as he does. Moreover, this so-called necessity is so far from necessary to his rank that if he had the sense to renounce it for a praiseworthy cause, he would be all the more respected. The people would bow before a minister who would go to the council on foot because he had sold his carriages when the state was in urgent need. Finally, the law does not require magnificence of anyone, and decorum never provides a reason to go against right.

A third relationship that is never taken into account, but that should always come first, is that of the utility each person derives from the social confederation, which strongly protects the immense possessions of the rich and barely lets a poor wretch enjoy the hut he built with his own hands. Aren't all the advantages of society for the powerful and the rich? Aren't all the lucrative jobs filled by them alone? Aren't all the pardons and all the exemptions reserved for them? And isn't public authority en-

tirely in their favor? When an esteemed man steals from his creditors or cheats in other ways, isn't he always sure of impunity? The beatings he gives, the violent actions he commits, even the murders and assassinations he is guilty of, aren't these affairs passed over in silence and forgotten after six months? If this same man is robbed, the forces of law and order go into action immediately, and woe to the innocents whom he suspects. Does he have to travel in a dangerous place? He is escorted through the countryside. Does the axle of his carriage break? Everyone rushes to his aid. Is it noisy near his door? He says a word and all is silent. Does the crowd inconvenience him? He gives a sign and everything becomes orderly. Is a cart driver in his way? His people are ready to beat him. And fifty honest pedestrians going about their business will be trampled before an idle good-for-nothing's coach is slowed down. All these attentions don't cost him a penny; they are the rich man's right, and not the price of riches. How different is the picture of the poor man! The more humanity owes him, the more society refuses him. All doors are closed to him, even when he has the right to make them open. And if he sometimes obtains justice, it is with greater difficulty than another would obtain pardon. If there are corvées to do, troops to be raised, he is given preference. In addition to his own burden, he always bears the one from which his richer neighbor has the influence to be exempted. At the slightest accident that happens to him, everyone abandons him. If his poor cart tips over, far from being helped by anyone, I consider him lucky if he avoids the passing insults of the flippant servants of some young duke. In short, all free assistance flees him when needed, precisely because he has nothing with which to pay for it. And I consider him a lost man if he has the misfortune to have an honest soul, an attractive daughter, and a powerful neighbor.

Another point, no less important to note, is that the losses of the poor are far less reparable than those of the rich, and that the difficulty of acquiring always increases in proportion to need. Nothing produces nothing; it is as true in business as in Physics. Money breeds money, and the first gold *pistole* is sometimes harder to earn than the second million. But it goes even further. All that the poor man pays is forever lost to him, and remains in, or returns to, the hands of the rich; and since the proceeds of taxes go sooner or later only to those men who take part in the government or who are close to it, they have—even in paying their share—a tangible interest in increasing taxes.

Let us summarize in a few words the social compact of the two estates. *You need me, for I am rich and you are poor, so let us come to an agreement between ourselves. I shall permit you to have the honor of serving me on con-*

dition that you give me what little you have for the trouble I shall take to command you.

If all these things are carefully combined, it will be found that in order to impose taxation in an equitable and truly proportional way, assessment should not be made solely in proportion to the goods of taxpayers, but in a proportion composed of the difference between their condition and the superfluity of their goods—a very important and very difficult calculation made daily by multitudes of honest clerks who know arithmetic, but which a Plato or a Montesquieu would only have dared to undertake with trembling and after imploring heaven for enlightenment and integrity.

Another drawback of personal taxation is that it is felt as too heavy a burden and is levied too harshly, which doesn't prevent it from being subject to many unpaid debts, because it is easier to hide one's head than one's possessions from the tax rolls and from prosecution.

Of all other kinds of assessment, the land tax or taille on real estate has always been thought most advantageous in countries where more consideration is given to the amount of proceeds and the certainty of payment than to the least annoyance for the people. Some have even dared to say that the peasant must be burdened to rouse him from his laziness, and that he would do nothing if he had nothing to pay. But experience among all the people of the world belies this ridiculous maxim. It is in Holland and England, where the grower pays very little, and above all in China, where he pays nothing, that land is best cultivated. On the contrary, everywhere that the farmer is assessed in proportion to the yield of his field, he lets it lie fallow or reaps only exactly what he needs to live. This is because for anyone who loses the fruit of his effort, it is a gain to do nothing; and placing a fine on work is a strange way to abolish laziness.

Taxation on land or on wheat, especially when it is excessive, results in two disadvantages so terrible that they eventually will depopulate or ruin all countries in which it is established.

The first comes from the lack of circulation of currency, for commerce and industry attract all the money from the countryside to the capitals, and since the tax destroys any proportion that might still exist between the farmer's needs and the price of his wheat, money always comes in and never returns. The richer the town, the more miserable the country. The proceeds from the taille pass from the hands of the prince or tax-farmer into those of artists and merchants; and the grower, who never receives any but the smallest part, is finally exhausted by always paying equally and always receiving less. How could a man live if he had only

veins and no arteries, or if his arteries only carried his blood to within several inches of his heart? Chardin says that in Persia the king's duties on foodstuffs are also paid in foodstuffs. This usage, which Herodotus indicates was practiced long ago in that same country until the time of Darius, can prevent the evil of which I have just spoken.[28] But unless in Persia the intendants, directors, clerks, and storehouse guardians are a different kind of people than everywhere else, I find it hard to believe that the least bit of all these products ever reaches the king, that the wheat doesn't rot in all the granaries, and that fire doesn't consume most of the storehouses.

The second disadvantage comes from an apparent advantage, which allows problems to grow worse before they are noticed. This is that wheat is a food whose value is not raised by taxes in the countries that produce it, so that despite its absolute necessity, the quantity is diminished without an increase in price. As a result, many people die of hunger although wheat continues to be cheap, and the farmer alone bears the burden of the tax, which he has been unable to pass on in the selling price. It must be carefully noted that the same reasoning should not be applied to the taille on real estate as to duties on all merchandise whose price is thereby increased and which are therefore paid not so much by the merchants as by the buyers. For these duties, however large they may be, are nevertheless voluntary, and are only paid by the merchant in proportion to the merchandise he buys. And since he buys only in proportion to his sales, he dictates the law to private individuals. But the farmer who, whether he sells or not, is constrained to pay a set price for the land he cultivates, is not the master to wait until the market value of his produce attains the price he wants; and even if he weren't to sell it to support himself, he would be forced to sell it to pay the taille, so that sometimes it is the enormity of the assessment that maintains the produce at a very low price.

Notice, further, that the resources of commerce and industry, far from making the taille more bearable by an abundance of money, only render it more burdensome. I shall not dwell on a very obvious point, namely that although a greater or lesser quantity of money in a state can give it more or less credit externally, it in no way alters the real wealth of the citizens, and does not make them any more or less well off. But I shall make two important remarks. One, that unless the state has surplus foodstuffs and the abundance of money comes from the foreign sale of these, the commercial towns are the only places to enjoy this abundance, and the peasant only becomes relatively poorer. The other, that since the price of all things rises as money multiplies, taxes too must rise propor-

tionately, so that the farmer finds himself more burdened without having more resources.

It should be apparent that the taille on lands is actually a tax on their product. While everyone agrees that nothing is so dangerous as a tax on wheat paid by the buyer, how can it be ignored that the evil is a hundred times worse when this tax is paid by the grower himself? Isn't this attacking the source of the state's subsistence? Isn't it working as directly as possible to depopulate the country, and consequently to ruin it in the long run? For there is no worse scarcity for a nation than that of men.

Only the genuine statesman is able to raise his sights above the financial objective in setting the tax base, to transform burdensome obligations into useful regulations of public policy, and to make the people wonder whether such establishments have not had as their end the good of the nation rather than the proceeds of taxation.

Duties on the importation of foreign merchandise which the inhabitants are eager to have but which the country does not need; on the exportation of domestic merchandise of which the country has no excess and which foreigners cannot do without; on the productions of frivolous and overly lucrative arts; on the entry into towns of things that are pure amenities and in general on every object of luxury will all fulfill this double purpose. Such taxes, which help the poor and burden the rich, must be used to prevent the continual increase of inequality of fortunes, the subjection to the rich of a multitude of workers and useless servants, the multiplication of idle people in towns, and the desertion of the countryside.

It is important to establish a proportion between the price of things and the duty to be paid on them such that the greediness of private individuals is not too tempted to fraud by the size of profits. Ease of contraband must also be prevented by giving preference to merchandise that is the least easy to hide. Finally, it is appropriate for the tax to be paid by the consumer of the taxed article rather than by the seller, who would have more temptations and means to use fraud due to the number of duties charged to him. This is the normal practice in China, the country in the world where taxes are the heaviest and the best paid. The merchant pays nothing. The buyer alone pays the duty, without giving rise either to protest or sedition, because since the vital foodstuffs, such as rice and wheat, are absolutely exempt, the people is not downtrodden and the tax falls only on those who are well-to-do. Moreover, all these precautions should not be dictated so much by fear of contraband as by the attention the government should give to protecting private individ-

uals from the seduction of illegitimate profits which, after creating bad citizens, would not be long in turning them into dishonest people.

Let high taxes be placed on liveries, on carriages, on mirrors, chandeliers, and furnishings, on cloth and gilding, on the courtyards and gardens of mansions, on theatrical performances of all kinds, on the idle professions such as those of buffoons, singers, orators, and in short on that mass of objects of luxury, diversion, and idleness that strike every eye, and that can scarcely be hidden because their only use is display and they would be useless if they were not seen. There is no need to worry that the proceeds of such taxes would be unpredictable because they are only based on things that are not absolute necessities. It is a great misunderstanding of men to believe that once seduced by luxury, they can ever renounce it. They would a hundred times sooner renounce necessities, and would prefer to die of hunger rather than of shame. The increased expense will merely be a new reason to sustain it, when the vanity of displaying opulence will benefit from both the price of the object and the expense of taxation. As long as there are rich men, they will want to distinguish themselves from the poor; and the state could not create a less burdensome nor more secure revenue than one based on this distinction.

For the same reason, industry would not suffer in the least from an economic order that enriched public Finances, revived Agriculture by relieving the farmer, and gradually brought all fortunes closer to that middle level that creates the genuine strength of a state. It could happen, I admit, that these taxes might contribute to making some fashions disappear more rapidly. But this would never occur without the substitution of others from which the worker would profit without any loss to the public treasury. In short, one of two things will happen if we assume that the spirit of the government is constantly to place all taxation on the surplus of wealth. Either the rich will renounce their superfluous expenses in favor of useful ones which will redound to the state's profit. In that case the tax base will have produced the effect of the best sumptuary laws, the expenses of the state will necessarily have diminished along with those of private individuals, and the public treasury could not thereby receive any less without having still less to pay out. Or, if the rich do not diminish their extravagances, the public treasury will have, in the proceeds from taxes, the resources it sought to provide for the real needs of the state. In the first case, the public treasury is enriched by all the reductions in its expenses; in the second, it is likewise enriched by the frivolous expenses of private individuals.

Let us add to all this an important distinction of political right, to

which governments, anxious to do everything by themselves, should pay much attention. I have said that since personal taxation and taxes on absolute necessities directly attack the right of property, and consequently the true basis of political society, they are always subject to dangerous consequences if they are not established with the express consent of the people or its representatives.[29] The same does not hold true for duties on things whose use can be forbidden. For then, since the private individual is not absolutely constrained to pay, his contribution can be considered voluntary. So that the private consent of each of the taxpayers replaces the general consent, and even presupposes it in a way. For why would the people be opposed to the assessment of any tax that falls only on anyone who is willing to pay it? It appears certain to me that whatever is neither proscribed by the laws nor contrary to the morals, and that the government can forbid, it can permit subject to the payment of a duty. If, for example, the government can forbid the use of carriages, it can with all the more reason impose a tax on carriages, which is a wise and useful way to blame their use without ending it. Then the tax can be considered as a kind of fine, whose proceeds compensate for the abuse it punishes.

Someone may object that since those whom Bodin calls *imposers*,[30] that is, those who impose or think up the forms of taxation, are in the class of the rich, they will not take care to spare others at their own expense and burden themselves in order to relieve the poor. But such ideas must be rejected. If in each nation those to whom the sovereign commits the government of the people were its enemies by definition, there would be no point in seeking what these men should do to make the people happy.

Notes

Bloom	Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Emile*. Edited by Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1979
Collected Writings, I	Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques, Dialogues. Collected Writings of Rousseau*, Vol. 1. Edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1991.
Collected Writings, II	Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *First Discourse and Polemics. Collected Writings of Rousseau*, Vol. 2. Edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1992.
Havens	Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts*. Edited by George R. Havens. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1946.
Launay	Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Oeuvres complètes*. Vols 1–2. Edited by Michel Launay. Paris: Editions du Seuil [Collection L'Intégrale], 1967–1971.
Leigh	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Correspondance complète*. Edited by R. A. Leigh. Geneva: Musée et Institut Voltaire, 1965ff.
Masters, I	Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *First and Second Discourses*. Edited by Roger D. Masters. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964.
Masters, II	Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Social Contract, with Geneva Manuscript and Political Economy*. Edited by Roger D. Masters. New York: St Martin's Press, 1978.
Meier	Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Diskurs über die Ungleichheit/ Discours sur l'inégalité*. 2nd ed. Edited by Heinrich Meier. Paderborn, Germany: Schöningh, 1990.
Pléiade	Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *Oeuvres Complètes*. Vols. 1–4. Paris. NRF-Editions de la Pléiade, 1959ff.
Vaughan	Jean-Jacques Rousseau. *The Political Writings of Rousseau*. Vols. 1–2. Edited by C. E. Vaughan. Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1915.

NOTES TO THE EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

1. See especially the Preface to a *Second Letter to Bordes, Collected Writings of Rousseau*, II, 182–85.

2. *Rousseau, Judge of Jean-Jacques, Dialogue III* (Pléiade, I, 934); *Collected Writings of Rousseau*, I, 213.

3. *Letter to M. de Malesherbes*, January 12, 1762 (Pléiade, I, 1135–1136). Compare *Confessions*, VIII (Pléiade, I, 351, 388) as well as Roger D. Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton; Princeton University Press, 1968), 206–207.

4. Rousseau himself was, of course, the first to emphasize the importance of his life for his work, not only in the *Confessions*, but also in the *Dialogues* and *Rêveries*. See Christopher Kelly, *Rousseau's Exemplary Life* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987). The first two volumes of the new biography by Maurice Cranston provide a balanced view of Rousseau's life up to 1762: *Jean-Jacques, the Early Life and Work of J.-J. Rousseau* and *The Noble Savage: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1754–1762* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). Among earlier biographical treatments, see especially Ronald Grimsley, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: A Study in Self-Awareness* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961; Jean Guéhenno, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, 2 Vols.; Trans. J. & D. Weightman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966); Jean Starobinski, *Transparency and Obstruction*; Trans. A. Goldhammer. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

5. *Pensées philosophiques*.

6. *First Discourse*, in *Collected Writings of Rousseau*, II, 5.

7. For the most significant works critical of Rousseau and his replies, see *Collected Writings of Rousseau* II, whose Introduction summarizes the polemics, xviii–xxiii.

8. *First Discourse*, in *Collected Writings*, II, 16.

9. *Collected Writings*, II, 126.

10. "If I were the leader of one of the peoples of Niger, I declare I would have a gallows built at the frontier of the country where I would hang without pardon the first European who would dare enter it, and the first Citizen who would try to leave." *Final Reply*, in *Collected Writings*, II, 125.

11. "*Quelle est la source de l'inégalité parmi les hommes, et si elle est autorisée par la loi naturelle?*" The announcement was published in the *Mercure de France* in November 1753.

12. *Confessions*, VII (Pléiade, I, 388–389). When Rousseau submitted this discourse to the prize competition of the Academy of Dijon, the judges refused to listen to the reading of the entire manuscript. See George Havens, "Hardiesse de Rousseau dans le *Discours sur l'inégalité*," *Europe* (November-December, 1961), 149–158. In the *Confessions*, Rousseau claimed that he had expected the rejection of his essay.

13. *Second Discourse*, 16 (Pléiade, I, 128). Because elsewhere Rousseau wrote that serious readers should read his major works at least twice (*Dialogues*, in *Collected Writings*, I, 211), this implies that the notes are essential for a philosophic understanding of the text.

14. *Second Discourse*, 4 (Pléiade, I, 80).

15. For Rousseau's views on Geneva, see his *Letter to d'Alembert*, translated by Allan Bloom under the title *Politics and the Arts* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960); and the *Lettres Ecrites de la Montagne* (Pléiade, III, 683–697). These works show the positive and negative sides of Rousseau's view of Geneva. In the *Con-*

fessions, Rousseau says that he had developed reservations about the political health of his fatherland during his visit there in 1754, shortly after the composition of the dedication to the *Second Discourse* (Pléiade, I, 396–97).

16. *Second Discourse*, 14.

17. Ibid., 13.

18. The issue of whether Rousseau intended his account of the state of nature (and, in particular, of the "pure state of nature" described in the First Part of the *Discourse*) as a historical account or merely as a statement of the principles of human nature has been much debated. On this, see Masters, *Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, 106–157. For recent restatements of the two sides, see Victor Gourevitch, "Rousseau's Pure State of Nature," *Interpretation*, Vol. 16, no. 1 (Fall 1988), 23–60; and Heinrich Meier, "The *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality among Men*," *Interpretation*, *16*, no. 2 (Winter 1988–89): 211–228.

19. *Second Discourse*, 15.

20. For an elaboration of Rousseau's principle of natural goodness as an attack on both classical and early modern political philosophy, see Arthur Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man: On the System of Rousseau's Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

21. *Second Discourse*, 60.

22. See, for example, Vaughan, I, 80–81.

23. Cf. Emile Durkheim, *Montesquieu and Rousseau*; Trans. R. Mannheim (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1960[1953]), 135. On the relationship between Rousseau's doctrine of the general will and his thought as a whole, see Leo Strauss, *What Is Political Philosophy?* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1959), 50–53.

24. *Second Discourse*, 65.

25. Ibid., 62.

26. Ibid., 67.

27. See ibid., note (*7), 80: " . . . they will scrupulously obey the Laws, . . . but they will nonetheless scorn a constitution . . ." See *Social Contract*, III, xv (Masters II, 101–4).

28. See Charles W. Hendel, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Moralist* (2 vols.; London: Oxford University Press, 1934); Bertrand de Jouvenel, "Essai sur la politique de Rousseau," in Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du Contrat Social* (Geneva: Cheval Ailé 1947), 15–160, especially 15–20, 116; and E. H. Wright, *The Meaning of Rousseau* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929).

29. See Charles Bordes, *Discourse on the Advantages of the Sciences and Arts* (1751), in *Collected Writings*, II, 93–109.

30. *Second Discourse*, 43.

31. This incredibly difficult and perhaps impossible objective explains in part the immense confusion that has arisen concerning the meaning of Rousseau's thought. See Eric Weil, "J.J. Rousseau et sa Politique," *Critique*, LVI (January 1952); 11.

32. *Second Discourse*, 53–54. See also *Social Contract*, I, iii, (Masters, II, 48–349); IV, chap. iv, (Masters, II, 113n); and the context of the epigraph from Virgil's *Aeneid*. The necessary role of force in the founding of political society may

go far to explain the influence of Machiavelli on Rousseau; see ibid., II, vii (Masters, II, 67–70); III, vi (Masters, II, 88); and *Political Economy*, below, 145.

33. Rousseau considered the following as a possible opening for the *Social Contract*: "Let us begin by clarifying an ambiguity which is the source of many sophisms. There are two ways of considering natural right." Fragment (Vaughan, I, 332). See also the two kinds of natural law discussed in the preface to the *Second Discourse*.

34. *Social Contract*, I, vi–viii. Only a modern author could have penned the resounding lines that open this famous book: "Man was [or is] born free, and everywhere he is in chains." (Masters, II, 46).

35. The phrase in French is "*qualité d'hommes*" in the *Second Discourse*, Second Part (Pléiade, III, 184; below, 59) and "*qualité d'homme*" in the *Social Contract*, I, iv (Pléiade, III, 356). Although some critics have claimed that Rousseau's political thought changed radically over time, careful study shows that the basic concepts in his major works are consistent, forming what Rousseau himself called his "system" (see Masters, *Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, x–xiii, 206–207; Melzer, *The Natural Goodness of Man*). There are, however, differences of emphasis in Rousseau's various works. The *Second Discourse* distinguishes between freedom in the sense of *free will* ("Man . . . realizes that he is free to acquiesce or resist" physical causes or "impulses") and freedom in the sense of *perfectibility* ("The faculty of self-perfection . . . which, with the aid of circumstances, successively develops all the others, and resides among us as much in the species as in the individual"). Although Rousseau claims that he bases the distinction between "man and animal" on the latter notion of freedom, it is the former—according to which humans are "free agents" whereas every other animal "chooses or rejects by instinct"—that is an "essential gift of nature" establishing politically relevant "rights." *Second Discourse*, First Part, below, 25–26; Second Part, 59, note *8, 82–83. This notion of human beings as "free agents" is presumed in the *Social Contract* (e.g., III, i), although Rousseau further distinguishes between *natural freedom* (the liberty of the state of nature, where each individual has "an unlimited right to all that tempts him and that he can get" and is free of any social obligation), *civil freedom* (the liberty of freely consenting to obey the laws of a legitimate society), and *moral freedom* (the liberty of "obedience to the law one has prescribed for oneself"). See *Social Contract*, I, viii (Masters, II, 56).

36. See, for example, John Charvet, *The Social Problem in the Philosophy of Rousseau* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1974).

37. C. E. Vaughan, Introduction, *Political Writings of J.-J Rousseau* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), I, 1–117, especially, 78–81).

38. Letter from Voltaire of August 30, 1755, below, 102.

39. See below, 105–107.

40. *Poème sur le désastre du Lisbonne, ou examen de cet axiome: 'tout est bien'*. For the view being criticized by Voltaire, see Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, Epistle I, line 194 and Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, *Theodicy*, I, 7–8.

41. *Letter of J. J. Rousseau to Mr. de Voltaire*, 18 August, 1756, below, 112–113.

42. Bonnet published his criticism as a letter in the *Mercure de France* of Oc-

tober, 1755. On Bonnet's subsequent biological writings, which were of significance in the history of evolutionary theory, see Stephen Jay Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), chap. 1.

43. *Letter from Philopolis*, below, 124.

44. *Letter to Louis de Boissy*, Director of the *Mercure de France*, dated November 29, 1755, and published in the *Mercure* the following January. For the text, see *Correspondance complète de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, ed. R.A. Leigh (Geneva: Musée et Institut Voltaire, 1966), III, 213–214.

45. *Letter to Philopolis*, below, 128.

46. Voltaire's famous novel, published in 1761, was interpreted by Rousseau as an answer to his *Letter to Voltaire* of August 18, 1756.

47. *Letter to Philopolis*, below, 129–130.

48. In the *Confessions*, Rousseau says that Bonnet was in fact a materialist but that he adopted "a very intolerant orthodoxy" on those occasions that he opposed Rousseau. See Pléiade, I, 632.

49. See *Correspondance complète de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, IV, 98ff.

50. *Observations of Charles-Georges LeRoy*, below, 134.

51. Ibid., *Rousseau's Reply*, 134.

52. Diderot, *Natural Right*, below pp. 136. On the theological origin of this concept, which had been used by Malebranche to describe God's providence as His "volonté générale," see Patrick Riley, *The General Will before Rousseau: The Transformation of the Divine into the Civic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986). For a discussion of Rousseau's doctrine as a response to Diderot's, see Grace G. Roosevelt, *Reading Rousseau in the Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 69–89.

53. *Natural Right*, 137. Note how Diderot uses arguments that had historically been used in theological context, transforming them into a secular defense of human "right" that is divorced from both revealed religion and natural science.

54. *Geneva Manuscript*, I, ii (Masters, II, 157–63). A fuller analysis will be presented in the Introduction to Volume IV of the *Collected Writings*. See also Masters, *Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, vi.

55. That this usage of the concept of the "general will" was in some sense informed by Diderot's article on *Natural Right*, if not inspired by it, is made explicit by a cross-reference to that article in Rousseau's text: "*See* RIGHT, for the source of this great and luminous principle [sc. the "general will"], which that article develops." *Political Economy*, below, 143 as well as the further cross-reference to Diderot's article on p. 145. Rousseau nonetheless seems to have viewed his understanding as totally different from that of Diderot, as is implied by his deletion of references to Diderot's article in the reeditions of the *Political Economy* of 1758 and 1782 (*Political Writings of Rousseau*, ed. C. E. Vaughan [Oxford: Blackwell, 1966], I, 242). The tensions between Rousseau and Diderot, which ultimately led to the rupture of their friendship, very clearly involved a series of disagreements on philosophical matters as well as purely personal conflicts.

56. *Political Economy*, below, 142.

57. Ibid., 144. On the relationship between this passage and what Rousseau called the "maxims of political art" or the prudential rules for analyzing political institutions, see Masters, *Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, viii.

58. The *Geneva Manuscript* (I, v) contains a reference to an article in the *Observateur Hollandais* dated January 2, 1756 (see Masters, *Political Philosophy of Rousseau*, 280–282), suggesting that the first version of the *Social Contract* was written sometime in the following months.

EDITORS' NOTES TO *Second Discourse*

This translation was originally based on the text in Vaughan, I, 125–220; in revising it, we have also consulted Pléiade, III, 109–223 and Launay, II, 202–262. Subsequent to the publication of these editions, a copy of the original 1755 edition with Rousseau's handwritten corrections was purchased by the Musée Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montmorency, France; we have been able to benefit from a facsimile of this edition kindly provided by Mr. Robert Thiery, Director of the Museum. The main features of this edition are carefully described by Heinrich Meier in the second edition of his German-French bilingual edition (Meier, 498–508). In this copy and in the editions of 1782 and following, there are a number of changes in the text. The principal additions are: p. 19 ("immediately after the creation"); p. 22 ("These are . . . devoured by beasts"); p. 24 ("and Paracelsus reports . . . Hippocrates"); p. 25, note ("There may be . . . the same use"); p. 32 ("the present infinitive"); p. 32 ("for the first idea . . . in common"); p. 36 ("like bloodthirsty Sully . . . *lacrimas dedit*"); pp. 58–59 ("I shall neglect . . . worthy of it"); p. 77, note ("But are there not . . . themselves without disadvantages?"); p. 83, note 8 ("neither animals nor Gods, but").

1. "Not in corrupt things, but in those which are well ordered in accordance with nature, should one consider that which is natural." *Politics*, 1254ª36–38 (I, v). The context of this quotation (Aristotle's discussion of natural slavery) should be compared to the *Social Contract*, I, ii–iv. In the first edition (and in Pléiade, III, 109), the source of the quotation is identified as Book II of the *Politics*. The misprint was noted by Rousseau himself (see facsimile edition described) and corrected in the 1782 edition.

2. The dedication to the Republic of Geneva was written in 1754 and is dated from Chambéry, where Rousseau stopped on his way to Geneva. His return to his native city was an event of particular importance for Rousseau; the prize-winning essayist was well received there, and on August 1, 1754, he returned to the Protestant faith and regained his Genevan citizenship. Since Rousseau was not formally a citizen of Geneva when the dedication was written, it was not strictly proper for him to speak as he does here. The style of the dedicatory epistle is marked by an often extravagant rhetoric, but beneath the glowing praise of Geneva Rousseau clearly delineates the requirements for the best regime a philosopher could wish for. A complete analysis of this dedication would indicate the extent to which these requirements were not fulfilled by Geneva in the eigh-

teenth century; indeed, a former First Syndic of Geneva wrote Rousseau: "You have followed the movements of your heart in the Dedicatory Epistle, and I fear it will be found that you flatter us too much; you represent us as we ought to be, and not as we are." Théophile Dufour, ed., *Correspondance Générale de J.-J. Rousseau* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1924), II, 193.

3. The "fatal misunderstandings" to which Rousseau refers were not merely a hypothetical possibility; the history of Geneva had been marked by ill-feeling between the citizen body (who formed the Conseil Général, the highest legally constituted legislative body) and the leading magistrates (the Petit Conseil, composed of twenty-five members with life tenure, and the Conseil des Deux-cents, elected by the Petit Conseil). In 1707 a conspiracy was quelled by the execution of its leader, Pierre Fatio; in 1737–38 a more serious conflict was settled only by the intervention and mediation of Zurich, Bern, and France. The reconciliation was far from "sincere and perpetual": civil strife recurred in 1766–68 and in 1780–82, foreign powers playing an important role in the settlement on each occasion. For Rousseau's own analysis of the constitution of Geneva as it stood after the Act of Mediation of 1738, see his *Lettres Ecrites de la Montagne*, especially vii–ix.

4. An indication of the irony of this passage may be in order. The Code of Political Edicts, which formed the constitutional basis of the Genevan government, was to have been published by the Petit Conseil according to the Act of Mediation of 1738; at the time of Rousseau's writing the Edicts had not been published (nor, in fact, had they been published when the Mediating powers were again called in to arbitrate in 1766). See Vaughan, II, 190.

5. Having addressed his male fellow-citizens of Geneva, Rousseau now turns to the magistrates of the city. Note that whereas the citizens are addressed as "magnificent, most honored, and sovereign lords," the magistrates are only "magnificent and most honored lords"; they are not sovereign. Compare *Social Contract*, III, i, and *Lettres Ecrites de la Montagne*, vii.

6. This flattering picture of Rousseau's father is not the least of the exaggerated elements in this Dedication. Isaac Rousseau was a proud, restless, headstrong individual who left Geneva a year after his marriage in order to make watches in Constantinople (where there was a "colony" of Swiss artisans). At his wife's request, the elder Rousseau returned to Geneva in 1711; Jean-Jacques was born on June 28, 1712. Isaac Rousseau's fun-loving and passionate nature was revealed in quarrels—caused by his penchant for hunting on the lands of Geneva's more solid citizens—which came to the attention of the Consistory. The most important of these arguments, with one Pierre Gautier, led to a sword fight on the streets of Geneva, as a result of which the elder Rousseau fled the city to avoid prosecution. At this time (1724–25), the young Jean-Jacques went to live with the pastor of Boissy, just outside Geneva; thereafter he was a none-too-diligent apprentice to several tradesmen of Geneva. Although Isaac Rousseau did introduce his son to Plutarch and the classics as well as to novels (see *Confessions*, I ([Pléiade, I, 9]), it can be wondered how many "wise lessons" Jean-Jacques received from a father who, having fled Geneva to avoid prosecution, virtually abandoned his twelve-year-old son and had little contact with him thereafter. See

F. C. Green, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1955), pp. 1–12, 36 and, for the best account of Rousseau's early life, Maurice Cranston, *Jean-Jacques: The Early Life and Work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1754–1762* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 21–29.

7. "The aberrations of foolish youth" followed upon Rousseau's disgust for the life of an apprentice engraver. One Sunday (March 14, 1728), returning to Geneva after a walk in the countryside, he found the gates of the city closed. To avoid the kind of beating previously received from his master for such misdeeds, Rousseau resolved to seek his fortune elsewhere. Thus began many years of wandering through Europe, during which Rousseau's experiences were as bizarre as they were varied. Having been directed to Mme de Warens, a Catholic proselytizer in Annecy, Rousseau was ultimately converted to Catholicism in Turin. Thereafter, Rousseau flitted from one occupation to another: lackey, music teacher knowing nothing of music, secretary to a somewhat fraudulent Greek Archimandrite seeking alms for the restoration of the Holy Sepulcher, lover of Mme de Warens (twelve years his senior), clerk in a survey office, tutor, inventor of a revolutionary system of numerical musical notation, secretary to the French ambassador in Venice, composer, secretary to a wealthy tax-collector, and so on. In the course of these extraordinary wanderings, Rousseau managed to educate himself, and after he settled in Paris in 1744, he eked out an existence at the margin of French high society until he gained fame with the prize-winning *First Discourse*. During this period, Rousseau began to live with a simple laundress, Thérèse Levasseur, who bore him five children (all of whom, by Rousseau's admission, were abandoned in a foundling home at their birth). Rousseau had good reason to speak of the "aberrations of foolish youth." See *Confessions*, Books I–VII, and the biographies by Green and Cranston cited in note 6.

8. Compare notes 3 and 4 above.

9. Here Rousseau turns from the civil magistrates of Geneva to its Protestant ministers. One should remember that in Calvinist Geneva, religion was of particular importance; "all religious questions, which were, of course, governmental questions, were examined by the Consistory composed of the pastors and twelve laymen." Daniel Mornet, *Rousseau: l'homme et l'oeuvre* (Paris: Hatier-Boivin, 1950), 10. On the political role of religion, compare *Social Contract*, IV, viii.

10. Rousseau now turns to the female citizens of Geneva (the word used here is *citoyennes*). Note that, strictly speaking, the "citizens" were but one of the five classes in Geneva, and that the political rights of citizenship (holding the highest magistracies and voting in the Conseil Général) were open only to males. For Rousseau's views on women, see *Émile*, V (Bloom, 357–406).

11. The inscription was "Know Thyself" (*gnōthi seauton*).

12. The reference is to Plato's *Republic*, X.611b–d. Note that for Rousseau the comparison of the human soul with the sea god Glaucus illuminates the problem of discovering man's "primitive state," whereas for Socrates the question concerns the immortality of the soul.

13. Jean Jacques Burlamaqui, *Principes du Droit Naturel*, I, i, § 2 (Geneva: Barillot & Fils, 1747), 2.

14. "The law of nature is that which she has taught all animals; a law not

peculiar to the human race, but shared by all living creatures, whether denizens of the air, the dry land, or the sea. Hence comes the union of male and female, which we call marriage; hence the procreation and rearing of children, for this is a law by the knowledge of which we see even the lower animals are distinguished." J. B. Moyle, trans., *Institutes of Justinian*, I, ii, 1 (2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon press, 1889), p. 4. Compare the almost identical formulation of Ulpian quoted by Robert Derathé, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et la science politique de son temps* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), 388.

15. Rousseau here seems to refer both to modern jurists, like Grotius, Pufendorf, and Barbeyrac, and to Hobbes and Locke. But it is at least possible that Rousseau is thinking most particularly of the former; later in the *Second Discourse* (35), Hobbes is explicitly distinguished from "the moderns." For the views of the "modern jurists," see Hugo Grotius, *Le Droit de la guerre et de la paix*, I, i, § 11 (Jean Barbeyrac, trans. [Amsterdam: Pierre de Coup, 1724], 52–53), and Samuel Pufendorf's critique of the notion of natural law in the works of Spinoza and Hobbes in *Le Droit de la nature et des gens*, II, ii, especially § 3 and 9 (Jean Barbeyrac, trans. [Amsterdam: Gerard Kuyper, 1706], I. 140–144, 150–152). Compare Pufendorf's definition of natural law (ibid., II, iii) with Hobbes's distinction between "rights of nature" and "laws of nature" (*Leviathan*, I, xiii–xiv). Compare also Burlamaqui, *Principes du Droit Naturel*, II, i, § 2 (ed. 1747, 142).

16. Compare Pufendorf, who considered "sociability" to be "the fundamental law of natural right." *Le Droit de la nature et des gens*, II, iii, § 15 (ed. 1706, I, 178).

17. "Learn whom God has ordered you to be, and in what part of human affairs you have been placed." Persius, *Satires*, iii, 71–72. Compare Pufendorf's use of this passage and the Delphic inscription "Know Thyself" in *Le Droit de la nature et des gens*, II, iv, § 5 (ed. 1706, I, 210).

18. Elsewhere Rousseau insists on the necessity of reading his books at least twice, which implies that these notes are absolutely essential if one is to understand the *Second Discourse* fully. *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*, Dialogue III (*Collected Writings*, I, 211; Pléiade, I, 932–933). Note also that this passage of the *Dialogues*, by suggesting that Rousseau's works develop his principles in an order that "was retrograde to that of their publication," indicates that the *Discourses* are the most complex formulation of Rousseau's thought. The need to read Rousseau's notes with care is reinforced by a peculiarity in their numbering in the first edition whose importance was first indicated to us by Heinrich Meier. Although modern editions number the footnotes sequentially, sometimes using roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.—as in the Pléiade) and sometimes using letters (a, b, c, etc.—as in Vaughan's edition), the original notes are marked with an odd combination of numbers and letters. After the discovery of the copy of the first edition with Rousseau's carefully noted corrections (facsimile published by the Musée Jean-Jacques Rousseau of Montmorency), the absence of changes in this odd notation implies that Rousseau himself may have intended to direct our attention by the resulting sequence. In the current edition, we have restored Rousseau's original notation. The following listing indicates the letters (in Vaughan's edition) or roman numerals (Pléiade) corresponding to Rousseau's symbols in the first edition: a or I = 1; b or II = 2; c or III = 3; d or IV = a; e or V = 4; f or

VI = 5; g or VII = d; h or VIII = 6; i or IX = 7; j or X = 8; k or XI = 9; l or XII = 10; m or XIII = b; n or XIV = 11; o or XV = 12; p or XVI = 13; q or XVII = c; r or XVIII = 14; s or XIX = 15. If it is assumed that the numbered notes were written first, before the addition of four lettered notes the central footnote was number 8 (in Vaughan, note j or in Pléiade, note X). This note remains in the central position with the addition of the four notes indicated by letters.

19. Compare the question proposed by the Academy of Dijon with the formulation adopted by Rousseau: reference to the authorization of inequality by natural law is replaced by the "foundations" of inequality.

20. Rousseau's phrase is "*des qualités de l'esprit ou de l'âme.*" At the risk of narrowing the meaning somewhat, the word *esprit* will always be translated "mind" even though it can mean "spirit" or "soul"; *âme* will be rendered by "soul." Compare this list of the natural inequalities among men with the qualities that first give rise to esteem in savage society (p. 47) and with the qualities that determine the "rank and fate of each man" once man has been perfected and civilized (p. 51).

21. This phrase is ambiguous, perhaps intentionally. Although Aristotle speaks of the analogy between the claws of animals and the nails of men, we are unable to find any passage in which he suggests that the latter evolved out of the former. See *Parts of Animals*, 687^{b}23–25 and 690^{a}8–11, (IV x) (A. L. Peck, trans. [Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1937], pp. 375, 391); and *History of Animals*, 486^{b}20 (I, i), 502^{b}1–5 (II, viii), and 517^{a}30-^{b}1 (III, ix), (D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, trans. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910]). Even a cursory reading of these works reveals the gulf between Aristotle's biological method, which assumes that each species is naturally distinct, and the radically evolutionary approach of Rousseau. For example, Aristotle asserts that man stands erect on two feet because "his nature and essence is divine" (*Parts of Animals*, 686^{a}27–30 [IV, x]); nature forms each species in terms of its end or perfection. See also *Physics*, II. 8.198^{b}–35–199^{a}8; *Metaphysics*, VI.10366^{b}25–33; *De Anima, III, i.*432^{a}1–2. For Rousseau, it is distinctly possible that the human species has evolved from a stage in which man was a quadruped, and this hypothesis can only be rejected after the kind of physiological and biological analysis outlined in his note (*3). In this mode of reasoning, Rousseau is also opposing such thinkers as Cicero, *De Nat. Deorum,* II.139, 153; Seneca, *Ep. Luc.*, 65.20; and especially Bossuet, *Discours syr l'histoire universelle,* II.i.

22. "So that in the first place, I put for a general inclination of all mankind, a perpetual and restless desire for power after power, that ceaseth only in death." Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I, xi. Compare ibid., I, xiii–xiv.

23. See Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, I, ii. Compare Pufendorf, *Le Droit de la nature et des gens*, II, i, § 8 and II, ii, § 2, as well as II, iii, § 16, where Barbeyrac quotes Cumberland (ed. 1706, I, 135, 137, and 182, n. 2). See also Richard Cumberland, *De Legibus Natura*, ii, § 29 (London: Nathanael Hooke, 1672), 155–157.

24. See *Republic* III.405d–408e, and compare Homer, *Iliad* XI. 639–40.

25. Compare Aristotle's view that "tame animals have a better nature than wild." *Politics* 1254^{b}10–11 (I, II).

26. Rousseau here cites Montaigne's "Of the Inequality among Us" (*Essays*, I, xlii): "Plutarch says somewhere that he does not find so great a difference between one beast and another as he does between one man and another . . . I shall gladly improve on Plutarch, and say that there is more difference between a given man and another than between a given man and a given beast." For another translation, see *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford, Cal.: Stanford University Press, 1958), 189. Montaigne's reference is to Plutarch's "That Beasts Use Reason," an essay cited by Rousseau in the *Social Contract*, I, ii.

27. Here Rousseau compares the development of the arts in Sparta (which was on the banks of the Eurotas river) and Athens. Compare *First Discourse*, *Collected Writings*, II, 9.

28. Rousseau here alludes to the Académie française, which perpetually revises its *Dictionary* of the French language. Compare this slighting reference to the academies with the *First Discourse*, *Collected Writings*, II, 19.

29. Cf. Diderot's *Natural Right* (below, 135–136). On Rousseau's understanding of virtue as "force" or resisting the impulses of nature in order to further the common good, see *Political Economy*, editorial note 17.

30. Note that, in this paragraph, Rousseau implies that Hobbes has established the correct definition of natural right, but that he has reasoned improperly concerning the implications of this definition. Compare with the Preface of this *Discourse* (13–14).

31. "To such an extent has ignorance of vices been more profitable to them [the Scythians] than the understanding of virtue to these [the Greeks]." Justin, *Histories*, II, ii. Although Rousseau is here silent about the context of the quotation, compare *First Discourse* (*Collected Writings*, II, 8–9, 14) with Justin's praise of the Scythians in Book II of his *Histories*. Compare Grotius, *Le Droit de la guerre et de la paix*, II, ii, § 2 (ed. 1724, 224).

32. The French term *amour-propre* is left untranslated. Although it can be translated as "vanity," we wish to distinguish it from Rousseau's uses of *vanité* (vanity). *L'amour de soi-meme*, which Rousseau distinguishes sharply from *amour-propre*, will be translated as "love of oneself." Compare the use of the term *amour-propre* in Barbeyrac's translation of Pufendorf, *Le Droit de la nature et des gens*, II, iii, esp. § 14 and § 16 (ed. 1706, I, 176–77, 183).

33. As the sequel shows, this "detractor" is Bernard Mandeville, whose *Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Public Benefits* (1714, F. B. Kaye, ed. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924], attempts to show that every virtue is fundamentally based upon selfishness and private vice. In that work Mandeville says, speaking of charity: "This virtue is often counterfeited by a passion of ours, call'd Pity or Compassion, which consists in a Fellow-feeling and Condolence for the Misfortunes and Calamities of others: all Mankind are more or less affected with it; but the weakest minds generally the most." (*The Fable of the Bees*, 287)

34. This example from *The Fable of the Bees* is followed by the comment:

"There would be no need of Virtue or Self-Denial to be moved at such a Scene; and not only a man of humanity, of good Morals and Commiseration, but likewise an Highwayman, an House-Breaker, or a Murderer could feel Anxieties on such an occasion." (285–289). Mandeville's point is that pity is not truly a virtue, which he defines as "every performance by which Man, contrary to the impulse of Nature, should endeavor the Benefit of others, or the Conquest of his own passions out of a Rational Ambition of being good." (34). Despite his apparent attack on Mandeville, Rousseau agrees that pity is not a virtue in this sense; as is clear in the sequel, Rousseau considers pity to be a prerational impulse that does not override man's natural inclination to preserve himself should the two basic natural principles conflict. Compare Preface, *Second Discourse* (14–15), noting the qualification on the operation of natural pity.

35. Lucius Cornelius Sulla or Sylla (138–78 B.C.), a Roman general and politician who, having been victorious in a civil war, became the dictator of Rome. From this position he proscribed and killed many of those who were opposed to him. See Plutarch's *Lives*, "Sulla," II, VI, xxx–xxxi (Bernadotte Perrin, trans. [Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge: Harvard University press, 1916], IV, 327–329, 341–343, 423–429).

36. Compare Montaigne's reference to the story in "Cowardice the Mother of Cruelty" (*Essays*, II, xxvii): "Alexander, Tyrant of Pherae, could not bear to listen to tragedies presented at the theater for fear that his citizens would see him moan at the misfortunes of Hecuba and Andromache—he who, without pity, had so many people cruelly murdered daily." In Frame's edition, the passage is at pp. 523–24. The basic source is Plutarch's *Lives*, "Pelopidas" XXIX (ed. 1917, V, 413–415).

37. Translated freely: "Nature, who gave men tears, confesses she gives the human race most tender hearts." Juvenal, *Satires*, XV, 131–133. This satire tells of the rivalry of the "Ombites" and the "Tentyrites" in Egypt. Religious differences and unbounded hatred lead the Tentyrites to eat their enemies for sheer pleasure. Juvenal then describes some extraordinarily violent deeds that did not lead to cannibalism for the sake of mere enjoyment; on the basis of these examples he concludes that pity is natural to man.

38. On the understanding of this distinction by Rousseau's contemporaries, see Montesquieu, *Spirit of the Laws*, XIV, ii and Buffon, *Histoire Naturelle*; II (1749 in *Oeuvres philosophiques de Buffon*, p. 337–46) as well as Buffon's reply to Rousseau on this point in Volume vii of *Histoire Naturelle*, published in 1758 (*Oeuvres philosophiques de Buffon*, p. 373–74).

39. Cf. Diderot, *De l'interpretation de la nature*, vii, where he says that opinions can be proven by "an uninterrupted chain of reasoning, which depends on observation at one end and experiment at the other." Diderot's entire discussion of confirming opinion is relevant to Rousseau's procedure.

40. Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, IV, iii, § 18; Rousseau uses the translation of Pierre Coste, which appeared under the title *Essai philosophique concernant l'entendement humain* (Revised ed. [Amsterdam: Henri Schelte, 1723], 698). Locke's "axiom" is also cited by Barbeyrac in his Translator's Preface to Pufendorf's *Le Droit de la nature et des gens*, § 2. (ed. 1706, I, v). Although

the French translation of Locke reads: "Il ne sauroit y avoir de l'injustice ou il n'y a point de propriété," Rousseau inserts *d'injure* where the translation, following the original, says *de l'injustice*. Compare Hobbes, *Leviathan*, I, xv. Rousseau's citation of Locke has an element of irony because, to this point in Rousseau's argument, there exists only "a sort of property"—that is, mere possession without any legal sanction. The origin of property in the complete sense of the word does not occur, according to Rousseau, until the division of labor has led men to the brink of civil society. Compare above pp. 41 and 46 with pp. 49 and 51.

41. Compare Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, V, 1113–1135, 1241–1296. As has often been noted, Lucretius's poem, expounding Epicurean philosophy, served as a model for Rousseau's *Second Discourse*. On the civilizing role of gold and silver, see also Locke, *Second Treatise*, v, especially § 50.

42. See Grotius, *Le Droit de la guerre et de la paix*, II, ii, § 2. (ed. 1724, 228). Pufendorf gives a different interpretation of this formula, *Le Droit de la nature et des gens*, IV, iv, § 13 (ed. 1706, I, 463). Compare Rousseau's presentation of a "labor theory of value" as the basis of all property rights with Locke's *Second Treatise*, v. Note also that a goddess is the source of laws whose purpose is the protection of property, and that these laws create a "new kind of right"; it appears that gods are introduced by men to sanctify private property (which would otherwise be insecure). Compare Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, V, 1136–1240.

43. Compare the second sentence of the *Social Contract*, I, i: "One who thinks himself the master of others does not fail to be more of a slave than they."

44. "Shocked by the newness of the ill, rich and yet wretched, he seeks to run away from his wealth and hates what he once prayed for." Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 127–128. The quotation describes the condition of Midas after Bacchus has granted his wish that everything he touch turn to gold.

45. Compare this passage with the apparent criticism of philosophers for their isolation from the common people (*Second Discourse*, Part I, 37).

46. Because Rousseau has just discussed one form of this "supposition"—that is, the argument that societies are formed by conquest—the remark is ironic.

47. See Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus* LV, 7.

48. Compare *Second Discourse*, note *13 (92–93).

49. "The most wretched servitude they call peace." In Tacitus, *Histories*, IV, xvii, the efforts of Civilis to incite the Gauls to revolt against Rome are described; Civilis "warned them in secret speeches of those evils they had suffered for so many years, while a wretched servitude they falsely called peace (*miseram servitutem falso pacem vocarent*)." Rousseau's citation of this phrase follows the version of Algernon Sidney, *Discourses Concerning Government*, chap. ii, § 15 (London: Booksellers of London and Westminster, 1698), p. 125.

50. See Locke, *First Treatise*, ii, vi, vii, ix, and *Second Treatise*, vi; and Sidney, *Discourses Concerning Government*, i, § 6–20; ii, § 2–4; and iii, § 1.

51. The work in question is the *Traité des droits de la reine très chrétienne sur divers etats de la monarchie d'Espagne*, an attempt to justify Louis XIV's dubious claims to certain Spanish possessions—claims that served as the basis of the War of Devolution (1667–68). By referring to an example of the Sun King's flagrantly

expansionist policy, Rousseau again "damns with false praise" (compare *First Discourse*, editorial note, 50; *Collected Writings*, II, 209). Lest this interpretation of Rousseau's quotation be thought tendentious, Sidney used this passage of the *Traité des droits de la reine* to criticize absolute monarchy; see *Discourses Concerning Government*, ii, § 30 (ed. 1698, 235). Barbeyrac also pointed out the irony of this profession of limited authority by Louis XIV in his translation of Pufendorf, *Le Droit de la nature et des gens*, VII, vi, § 10, n. 1 (ed. 1706, II, 273).

52. Ibid., VII, viii, § 6, n. 2 (ed. 1706, II, 302). For the original, see Locke, *Second Treatise*, iv, § 23. It is not an accident that, instead of quoting Locke directly, Rousseau cites (and is willing to neglect) the "authority of Barbeyrac"; compare Rousseau's remarks on the authoritative character of Barbeyrac in the *Social Contract*, II, ii.

53. Pufendorf, *Le Droit de la nature et des gens*, VII, iii, § 1 and vi, § 5 (ed. 1706, II, 223, 265–266). See Grotius, *Le Droit de la guerre et de la paix*, I, iii, § 8 (ed. 1724, pp. 121–124).

54. Note the tentative character of Rousseau's remarks concerning the social contract, and compare the "common opinion" to which he here restricts himself with the formulations of Hobbes's *Leviathan*, II, xvii–xviii, and Locke's *Second Treatise*, viii (especially § 95–98) and xix. Rousseau implicitly distinguishes the "fundamental compact of all governments" from the original bond of a society without a government—those "general conventions which all individuals pledged to observe, and regarding which the Community became the guarantor for each individual" (56). Compare the "common opinion" that Rousseau claims he is "following" with the "supposition which does not permit of serious debate" (ibid.).

55. Compare this preliminary discussion of the relationship between the magistrates and the laws produced by the "single will" of the people with the concept of the "general will" and the subordination of the "government" to the "sovereign" in the *Social Contract*, especially I, vi–vii; II, i–vi; and III, i.

56. Note the implication that religion has served to protect illegitimate government from overthrow, and compare Rousseau's remarks on religion in the *Social Contract*, especially II, vii and IV, viii.

57. The French word *seigneur* is derived from the Latin word *senior*, the comparative of *senex* (old); "the authority accorded to age made the meaning of old man shift to that of seigneur." E. Littré, *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris: Hachette, 1869), II–ii, 1953.

58. Compare V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism*, especially chaps. viii and x.

59. "If it is in my brother's breast that you order me to sink my sword, or in my father's throat, or even in the unborn child in my pregnant wife's womb, I shall do it all, even if my right hand is unwilling." Lucan, *Pharsalia*, I, 376–378. In this passage, Laelius is answering Caesar's cry to march on Rome, and in so doing overcomes the doubts of the soldiers. As Vaughan points out (I, 193, n. 3), Rousseau substitutes *gravideque* for *plenaque*; the same substitution will be found in the citation of this passage by Sidney, *Discourses Concerning Government*, ii, § 19 (ed. 1698, 147).

60. "In which there is no hope to be derived from an honorable deed," a

variant of a phrase in Tacitus (*pauci, quis nulla ex honesto spes*), *Annals*, V, iii. Compare Sidney, *Discourses Concerning Government*, ii, § 20, where the phrase *quibus ex honesto nulla est spes* is used (ed. 1698, 150).

61. Compare Montaigne, "Of Cannibals," *Essays*, I, xxxi (Frame, p. 159).

62. See Herodotus, *Histories*, III, 83. "Then Otanes, his proposal to give the Persians equality being defeated, thus spoke among them all: 'Friends and partisans! Seeing that it is plain that one of us must be made king (whether by lot, or by our suffering the people of Persia to choose whom they will, or in some other way), know that I will not enter the lists with you; I desire neither to rule nor to be ruled; but if I waive my claim to be king, I make this condition, that neither I nor any of my posterity shall be subject to any one of you.' To these terms the six others agreed; Otanes took no part in the contest but stood aside; and to this day his house (and none other in Persia) remains free, nor is compelled to render any unwilling obedience, so long as it transgresses no Persian law." (A. D. Godley, trans. [Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938], II, iii).

63. Note that Rousseau here assumes that it is logically necessary for the binding power of law to be general. Compare *Social Contract*, especially I, vi and II, iv. Hence this remark also implies the distinction between the laws, which are enacted by the Sovereign, and decrees or other applications of the law by the Government or Prince (see ibid., II, v and III, i).

64. Compare Herodotus, *Histories*, III, 141, 147, 149.

65. This passage from Buffon's *Histoire naturelle, De la nature de l'homme* implies the validity of modern natural science as an "authority" for philosophy, at least insofar as its reasoning is "solid and sublime." Note the character of Rousseau's remaining notes. Rousseau refers to the edition of the *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* in 12° (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1752, reprinted in 1774), IV, 151–152. Vaughan also makes reference to the edition in 4° (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1749, second edition 1750), II, 429–430.

66. Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, *Essai sur l'origine des connoissances humaines*, I, iv, ch. ii, § 23 (2 vols.; Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1746), I, 202–203.

67. Note the radical character of Rousseau's analysis of man's natural condition and his use of empirical examples of humans born outside of society (i.e., in a "genuine" state of nature). Compare editorial note 21 to the *Second Discourse*.

68. The Northwest Division of Arabia (extending along the Red Sea from the Gulf of Akabah to about the parallel of 20 North Latitude, and including Mecca and Medina).

69. Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière,* Preuves de la théorie de la terre, art. 7 (2nd ed. in 4°, 1750), I, 242–243.

70. Compare Locke, *Second Treatise*, V, especially § 43.

71. A fourth-century disciple of Aristotle known as a historian and geographer; few fragments of his works are extant.

72. St. Jerome, *Against Jovinianus*, II, § 13. Rousseau omits the equation, in the original, of the reign of Saturn with the Golden Age. See Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Second Series (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1893), VI, 397.

This sentence was cited by Barbeyrac in his translation of Grotius, *Le Droit de la guerre et de la paix*, II, ii, § 2, n. 13 (ed. 1724, 225). Compare the two discourses "On Eating Meat" in Plutarch's *Moralia*.

73. Compare *Second Discourse*, note *8 (82–86).

74. Antoine François Prévost, ed., *Histoire Générale des Voyages* (20 vols.; Paris: Didot, 1746–91), V, 157. The first seven volumes of this compendium were a translation of John Green's *A New General Collection of Voyages and Travels* (London: T. Astley, 1745–47). The passage quoted here is a paraphrase of Peter Kolben (or Pierre Kolbe), *Description du Cap de Bonne-Espérance*, I, xxiii, § 7–8 (3 vols.; Amsterdam: Jean Catufle, 1742), I, 396–399. According to the sources, the Hottentots swim with their neck (*col*) upright, not their body (*corps*).

75. *Histoire générale des voyages*, V, 155–156. In both quotations from this work, Rousseau omits remarks that are not relevant to his point. The original source is Kolben, *Description du Cap de Bonne-Espérance*, I, vi, § 14 (I, 99–100) and I, xi, § 10 (I, 195–197).

76. The work in question is *Observations sur l'histoire naturelle, sur la physique et sur la peinture*, a periodical first published in Paris in 1752 under the editorship of Jacques Gautier d'Agoty.

77. Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière,* Histoire naturelle du cheval (2nd ed. in 4°, 1750), IV, 226–227.

78. On this entire note, compare Rousseau's *Letter to Voltaire*, 18 August, 1756 (below, 108–121). In this letter Rousseau also argues that all nature follows regular laws, which could conceivably be understood by means of modern science (ibid., 113).

79. See Montaigne, "The Profit of One Man is the Damage of Another," *Essays*, I, xxii (Frame, 77).

80. See Rousseau's *L'État de guerre* (Vaughan, I, 302–303).

81. Compare Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*, cxii–cxxii, and *Spirit of the Laws*, XXIII, especially xv–xxviii.

82. That is, those who claim descent from a divinely inspired ancestor like Abraham—hence, most particularly, those believing in the Judeo-Christian (and Moslem) religions.

83. This obscure phrase implies that for some men religion is respectable only because it serves the necessary social function of making conventional morality appear to be divinely ordained (and not because man's first ancestor was, like Adam in the Garden of Eden, truly moral). Compare Machiavelli, *Discourses on Titus Livy*, I, xi.

84. This long note summarizes some of the main themes of the *First Discourse*, to which it should be compared. Rousseau's denial that he intends to lead men back into the forests should be emphasized; the state of nature provides a standard for judging civil society, but not a practical and generally applicable prescription for reform.

85. *Histoire générale des voyages*, V, 87–89.

86. With great delicacy, Rousseau here proposes the experimental cross-breeding of orangutans and humans as a possible proof of the status of the former

as men in the pure state of nature. Rousseau thereby suggests one possible solution to the task ascribed to the "Aristotles and Plinys of our century" in the Preface to the *Second Discourse* (above, 13).

87. Compare Aristotle's *Politics* 1253a3–5 (I, ii): "He who is without a polis, by reason of his own nature and not of some accident, is either a poor sort of being, or a being higher than man . . ."(Ernest Barker, trans. [Oxford: Clarendon press, 1946], 5)

88. See the passage of Condillac's *Essai sur l'origine des connoissances humaines*, cited above, note 66.

89. This long note indicates clearly the extent to which modern anthropology and the comparative study of cultures and politics may be said to derive from the theoretical position set forth by Rousseau.

90. Rousseau uses the word "specious" in the eighteenth century meaning of "plausible" or "apparently sound" (*Oxford English Dictionary* [Compact Edition; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988], II, 2950.) In the following passage, Rousseau transcribes an anonymous French translation of Locke's *Second Treatise*, vii, § 79–80. Here Locke's English is quoted, following the second edition (London: Awnsham and John Churchill, 1694), 224–225. Where the original differs from the French translation used by Rousseau, the latter is followed.

91. This distinction between the natural process of a child's development and existing patterns of education in society is obviously the root of Rousseau's conception of a natural education as it is developed in *Émile*.

92. This long note, with its criticism of Locke, and the text to which it is appended clearly deny the natural status of the human family. In effect, however, Locke's own arguments are not as far from those of Rousseau's *Second Discourse* as this note makes it appear; compare Locke, *First Treatise of Government*, vi, § 54–58; *Second Treatise of Civil Government*, vi, § 60 (especially the reference to "uncertain mixture, or easy and frequent solutions of conjugal society"); vii, § 78, 82, and *Essay on Human Understanding*, I, iii, § 12 (where Locke uses the widespread practice of infanticide to challenge the notion of an innate duty to rear children). Moreover, Rousseau elsewhere took a view that seems closer to that of Locke: "The most ancient of all societies, and the most natural one, is that of the family. Yet children remain bound to their father only for as long as they need him for their self-preservation. As soon as this need ceases, the natural bond dissolves. The children exempt from the obedience they owed the father, and the father, exempt from the care he owed the children, all return equally to independence. If they continue to remain united, it is no longer naturally but voluntarily, and the family itself is maintained only by convention." *Social Contract*, I, ii (Masters, II, 47). Compare also *Émile*, v (Bloom, 357–64, 390–92; 406) where Rousseau implies that there may be a something akin to marriage by nature. On the relation between the status of the family in Locke and Rousseau, see John Scott, "The Foundations of Rousseau's Political Philosophy" (Ph.D Dissertation, University of Chicago, 1992), pp. 247–48.

93. "Nor would anything of the happiness of the human race disappear if, when the crowd and confusion of so many languages has been expelled, [all]

mortals should cultivate [this] one art and if it should be permitted to explain anything with signs, movements, and actions. But now it has so been established that the condition of animals that are popularly believed to be brutes is far better than ours in this regard, inasmuch as they indicate their feelings and thoughts without an interpreter more readily and perhaps more happily than any mortals can, especially if they use a foreign language." Isaac Vossius, *De Poematum Cantu et Viribus Rythmi* (Oxford: Theatro Sheldoniano, 1673), 65–66. The words in brackets are omitted in Rousseau's quotation of the original.

94. Plato, *Republic*, VII, 522c–d. Plato's discussion of the relationship between the science of numbers and philosophic speculation is highly relevant to Rousseau's argument in this note. Compare *Émile*, IV (Bloom, 204–6, 270–71).

95. Reproduced, xxx.

96. The original source of the story is Kolben, *Description du Cap de Bonne-Espérance*, I, xii, § 11 (ed. 1742, I, 234–235).

97. Isocrates, *Areopagitica*, 21–22. See George Norlin, trans., *Isocrates* (London: Loeb Classical Library; William Heinemann, 1929), II, 117.

98. This note is of particular importance. On the one hand, Rousseau criticizes Hobbes's rejection of the classical conception of "distributive justice," while on the other he seeks to limit the role of law to the establishment of perfectly general and impersonal standards. The classical view that all regimes are based on a principle of distributive justice—that is, a principle of rewarding personal merit by "distinguishing and favoring" individuals in proportion to their intrinsic worth—is set forth most clearly in Book V of Aristotle's *Ethics*, 1130ᵇ30–1131ᵇ24. Aristotle distinguishes between such "distributive justice," in which awards are made "according to merit," and "commutative" or "rectificatory justice": the latter treats all men as equal and merely attempts to correct or punish specific actions regardless of the personal merits of the individuals in question. In Chapter xv of the *Leviathan*, Hobbes explicitly criticizes the classical distinction, arguing that the reward for merit "is not due by justice; but is rewarded of grace only"—that is, the only relevant standard in political life is commutative justice, which treats every subject of the laws equally regardless of his personal worth. Rousseau, after quoting from Isocrates, asserts that standards of distributive justice are necessarily present in all societies, however corrupt, but he diverges sharply from the classical view by limiting the scope of legal provisions to actions. The resulting distinction between "morals" and "right" or "law," which characterizes modern thought generally, presupposes that laws can never be used as the basis of rewards for personal virtue. Whereas other modern political philosophers tended to reject the classical standard of virtue (thereby rejecting distributive justice in favor of commutative justice as the basis of the political order), Rousseau attempted to use modern principles in order to found a political society in which the classical notion of virtue might still have a place. Compare *Social Contract*, IV, vii.

EDITORS' NOTES TO THREE FRAGMENTS FROM EARLY VERSIONS OF THE *Discourse on Inequality*

These three fragments can be found in Meier, 386–411. Versions of the first can also be found in Pleiade, III, 224–25 and Launay II, 264–67; a version of the second can be found in Launay II, 264–67; and parts of the third can be found in Pléiade, III, 1356–58. We have followed Meier's readings of the manuscript, but, with a few exceptions, have not reproduced material that Rousseau struck out. Only the first fragment is written in Rousseau's handwriting, but the corrections in each of the other two are by him. The translation is by Christopher Kelly.

1. For the place this passage was intended to occupy in the *Discourse*, see note 4 below.

2. According to Meier, at this point Rousseau first wrote "and not being able to know everything without knowing them." Then he struck out "not being able to know everything," and wrote in "accustoming himself to judging things." Finally, he struck out, "to judging things without knowing them." Following Meier, we have attempted to restore the sense of this passage.

3. This paragraph is incomplete. On the facing page of the manuscript appear the three following fragments:

"Other causes not less active although less serious cooperated in fomenting the process of inequality from every direction."

"But this is perhaps saying too much about this particular cause while I have so many others to develop."

"Let us return"

4. This passage was evidently intended to conclude the *Discourse*. For its place in the text, see page 66 above.

5. For the place this passage was meant to occupy in the *Discourse*, see 62–63 above.

6. At this point Rousseau wrote and then struck out, "Thus the old Phrases of public Good, interest of the People, and the ancient maxims of State were preserved in order to serve as Exordia to Public Edicts, but those who placed the State in the person of the Master and who sacrificed all the people to his smallest interests were the only ones admitted into Councils."

7. "Who guards the guardians?" Juvenal, *Satires*, VI, 347–348.

8. In the *Second Treatise of Government*, Locke attacks an argument in favor of the absolute power of monarchs by saying, "This is to think that Men are so foolish that they take care to avoid what Mischiefs may be done them by *Pole-Cats* or *Foxes*, but are content, nay think it Safety, to be devoured by *Lions*" (*Second Treatise*, Ch. vii, § 93).

EDITORS' NOTES,
Letter from Voltaire to Rousseau, August 30, 1755

Numerous versions of this letter exist. We have used the one actually received by Rousseau written in the handwriting of one of Voltaire's secretaries with corrections by Voltaire. This version can be found in R. A. Leigh's edition of the *Correspondance complète de Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (Lettre 317, IV, 158–162) along with variants from the other versions and very useful notes. More useful information can be found in *Selected Letters of Voltaire*, annotated and translated by Theodore Besterman (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1963), 148–159. Because of the extreme eccentricity of Voltaire's capitalization, in this respect we have followed the version published by Launay in his edition of Rousseau's *Oeuvres complètes*, Vol. 2, 268–269, which is the version copied by Rousseau. During the lifetime of Rousseau and Voltaire it was published without permission in the *Mercure de France*, October 1755, then by Voltaire at the head of his *L'Orphelin de la Chine*, in a corrected version given by Rousseau in the *Mercure*, November 1755, and in an edition of *Oeuvres de Voltaire* (Geneva, 1775).

1. This letter shows a very cursory glance at the *Second Discourse*. For a more thorough version of Voltaire's reaction, see G. R. Havens, *Voltaire's Marginalia on Rousseau* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1971).

2. This date is accepted as plausible although it appears only in the versions printed by the *Mercure*.

3. Voltaire had recently moved to les Délices, near Geneva when Rousseau sent him a copy of the *Second Discourse*. Voltaire's proximity to Geneva contributed to Rousseau's decision not to return to his homeland at this time. Rousseau says that he feared that Voltaire's presence would "cause a revolution" in Geneva by introducing Parisian morals there. He says that he hinted at this in his response to Voltaire's letter. See *Confessions*, VIII (Pléiade, I, 396–397).

4. The word "*bêtes*," translated as "stupid" also means beasts or animals. The contrast with intelligence and the following sentence indicate that Voltaire is playing on both meanings. Voltaire's *esprit* is rendered as "intelligence," but it could also be read as "wit." In reading this passage, the contrast with Rousseau's discussion of the stupidity and limited "qualities of mind" (*qualités d'esprit*) of natural humans should not be forgotten. Voltaire is referring to the animal-like existence of humans in the pure state of nature described in the First Part of the *Second Discourse*.

5. Torquato Tasso (1544–1595) is the author of *Jerusalem Delivered* which was partially translated by Rousseau. His life was the theme of the first version of the first act of Rousseau's opera, *Les Muses galantes*. Rousseau was advised that this act would not please the court (conceivably because of its anti-aristocratic theme) and substituted one based on Hesiod. See *Confessions*, VII (Pléiade, I, 334).

6. The version edited by Launay reads "your."

7. The first volume of the *Encyclopedia* edited by Diderot and d'Alembert was published in 1751. Rousseau contributed articles on music.

8. The Jansenists were the leading religious opponents of the Jesuits in France. Their opposition is shown most famously in Pascal's *Provincial Letters*.

9. *Oedipus*, Voltaire's first play, was first performed in 1718, not long after his release from the Bastille. In spite of the opposition about which Voltaire speaks here, it was a popular and financial success.

10. This is the Abbé Pierre François Guyot Desfontaines (1685–1745), who had been charged with homosexuality and imprisoned in an insane asylum. He had been released as a result of Voltaire's influence.

11. This work is the *Abridgement of Universal History from Charlemagne to Charles V, by Mr. de Voltaire*. It had been printed by the bookseller Néaulme to whom it had been sold by Laurent Angliviel de La Beaumelle.

12. Jean Chapelain (1595–1674) wrote *The Maid, or France Set Free*.

13. Voltaire refers to *La Pucelle* or *The Maid*, which had, in fact, been completed a little under twenty years earlier. His indirect reference to this treatment of Joan of Arc is a sign of his unwillingness to acknowledge this work publicly.

14. Voltaire refers to the *Precis of the Age of Louis XIV*. He had been made royal historiographer in 1745 and served until 1750. The bookseller referred to here is named Le Prieur.

15. Augustus was originally named Gaius Octavius. Voltaire refers to the major poets and political figures alive during the fall of the Roman Republic and the beginning of the empire.

16. The poet Clément Marot (1495–1544) wrote, among other major works, an important translation of the Psalms. The Saint Bartholemew's Day Massacre of Protestants took place on August 24, 1572.

17. *Le Cid* was written by Corneille and was first performed in 1636. The Fronde lasted from 1648 to 1652.

18. Tahmasp-Kouli-Khan (1688–1747) was shah of Persia from 1736 under the name of Nadir.

19. Nicolas Malebranche (1638–1715) wrote *On the Quest for Truth*.

20. Marc Chappuis (1714–1779) was a Genevan friend of Rousseau. He is mentioned in Book VIII of the *Confessions* (Pléiade, I, 394).

EDITORS' NOTES, *Letter from Rousseau to Voltaire, September 10, 1755*

For the text of this letter, we have used Pléiade, III, 226–229. On the circumstances of its composition, see Maurice Cranston, *The Noble Savage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 9–10.

1. For the irony of this remark, compare *First Discourse* (*Collected Writings*, II, 15).

2. The word (*bêtise*) refers to Voltaire's double-entendre; see editorial note 4 to the preceding *Letter from Voltaire to Rousseau* and compare the last line of this letter.

3. A reference to Voltaire's "Memnon on Human Wisdom" (1749).

4. Montaigne, "On Pedantry," *Essays*, I, 25 (Frame, 104).

5. The reference is to the title character of Molière's play, *George Dandin*.

6. In Dufour's edition of the *Correspondance générale* the following note to the passage is attributed to Rousseau: "The lotus and the moly are made famous by Homer in the *Odyssey*. The first provided a food worthy of the gods and seemed so delicious to the compagnons of Ulysses that he had to use violence to get them to come back on board their ships. Mercury gave the second to Ulysses as the means to preserve him from the enchantments of Circe the magician." See Pléiade, III, 1382.

EDITORS' NOTES, *Letter from J. J. Rousseau to Mr. de Voltaire, August 18, 1756*

Translation by Terence E. Marshall. For the text, see Pléiade, IV, 1059–1075.

1. This letter was written in response to Voltaire's poem on the Lisbon earthquake (*Poème sur le désastre de Lisbonne, ou examen de cet axiome: "tout est bien"*), which had been sent to Rousseau by Charles Duclos along with Voltaire's "Poem on Natural Law" (probably on Voltaire's own suggestion). The Lisbon earthquake occurred on November 1, 1755, and estimates of the number of those killed vary from 20,000 to 60,000 persons. Voltaire composed the poem before year's end and circulated it anonymously, attempting at first to attribute authorship to someone name R. P. Lièbaut. The poem was published in Geneva in March 1756, and sent to Rousseau in July. For the circumstances of the composition of Rousseau's letter in reply to Voltaire, see Cranston, *The Noble Savage*, 29–31. This letter was first published, without Rousseau's knowledge and against his wishes, by the Cramer brothers in Geneva in 1760 (Ibid., 220–221). Rousseau discusses his letter and its eventual publication in *Confessions*, IX and X (Pléiade, I, 429–430 and 539–542). When Voltaire received Rousseau's letter, he promised a reply, but one was never sent. See editorial note 43 and Voltaire's letter of September 12, 1756 (above, 122).

2. Two words and their derivatives that recur in the text—*tout* and *mal*—pose problems for translation. In some instances, *tout* is translated as "all," in others as "everything," and in others as "the whole" (*le tout*). *Mal* is sometimes translated as "bad," other times as "evil," and other times as "ill" or "trouble."

3. See Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, Epistle I, 294, and Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, *Theodicy*, I.7 and 89. Widely debated in the eighteenth century, the question of "optimism" and "pessimism" relates to the Enlightenment's project to conquer or "master" nature according to human will, as opposed to the traditional view subordinating human will or desire to natural limits. In a novel way, Rousseau discusses the natural as providing criteria of good and bad, first in the *Second Discourse*, prompting Voltaire's correspondence, and later in the *Emile*, which can be read in part as a response to Voltaire's ridicule of optimism in *Candide*. In addition to the Biblical tradition, for examples of the classical view of providence, see Plato, *Timaeus*, $30^{b}5$ ff; *Laws* 899^{d} ff, $903^{b}9$–10; Proclus, *Ten Problems Concerning Providence*.

4. The original edition of Voltaire's poem ended with these verses:

> *Que faut-il ô mortels? Mortels, il faut souffrir*
> *Se soumettre en silence, adorer et mourir.*
>
> [What is necessary, o mortals? Mortals, it is necessary to suffer,
> To submit in silence, adore, and die.]

5. See the beginning of Voltaire's *Letter to Rousseau* of August 30, 1755, referring to the *Second Discourse* as Rousseau's "new book against the human race" (102). In his Preface to the poem on the *Disaster of Lisbon*, Voltaire says "undoubtedly everything (*tout*) is arranged, everything (*tout*) is ordered by Providence; but it is only too obvious (*sensible*) that everything (*tout*) for a long time has not been arranged for our present well-being."

6. Compare Cicero, *De Senectute*, § XIX and § XX, where Cato the Elder speaks of old age and death. See Rousseau's later quotation from this work (below, editorial note 28).

7. See Voltaire's *Zadig or Destiny*, XX, "The Hermit." Ironically the conclusion of Voltaire's tale seems to maintain the very position on Providence that he repudiates in his poem on Lisbon and that Rousseau supports in his reply.

8. See Erasmus, *Colloquies*, "The Godly Feast" (Trans. C. R. Thompson; Indiananpolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1957), 160. Throughout his letter, Rousseau's citations from Cicero's *De Senectute* seem to be drawn from the *Colloquies*.

9. Ibid., 156–157. Theophilus is speaking. Uranius, speaking afterward, disagrees. See Plato, *Republic*, XI, 619c–e, 621a–b. Voltaire's text does not mention Erasmus, and Rousseau first added this reference for his 1764 edition of his letter.

10. Voltaire was then living in Vevey, outside Geneva.

11. "I do not regret having lived, since I have lived in such a fashion that I do not think I was born in vain." The quote is found in Erasmus, *Colloquies*, 156. See Cicero, *De Senectute*, XXIII, 84. The syntax of Cicero's text is revised to change the grammar from a subordinate clause to an independent sentence. The original reads: "*Neque me vixisse paenitet, quoniam ita vixi ut non frustra me natum existimem.*"

12. See *Poem on the Disaster of Lisbon*, Voltaire's footnote to line 75. Cf. Pope, *Essay on Man*, I, 243–258 and III, 7–26. The reference in the sequel is to Jean-Pierre de Crousaz (1663–1750), who published two works against Pope: *Examen de l'essai de M. Pope sur l'homme* (Lausanne: Marc-Michel Bousquet, 1737) and *Commentaire sur la traduction en vers, de M. l'Abbeé du Resnel, de l'Essai de M. Pope sur l'homme* (Geneva: Pelliser, 1738). Voltaire refers to him in his poem as a "wise geometer." Rousseau, in an earlier draft, says of him: "A mediocre geometer, poor reasoner, obdurate and pedantic mind, obscure and cowardly writer, this man acquired, I know not how, some reputation that he would soon have lost if one had a mind to read him." For other references to de Crousaz, see the criticism by Julie in Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, II, Letter 18, as well as the less unfavorable mention in *Émile*, II (Pléiade, IV, 371).

13. See *Poem on the Disaster of Lisbon*, Voltaire's lengthy footnote to line 75.

14. Ibid.

15. Pascal, *Pensées*, 176. Voltaire, "Dialogue entre un Brahmane et un Jésuite sur la nécessité et l'enchaînement des choses." Compare also *Zadig*, XX, "The Hermit," in *The Portable Voltaire* (New York: Viking, 1949), 405.

16. This seems to be an ironic reference to Voltaire's own skeptical comments at lines 161–206 of his poem. Compare this with his footnote to line 75. See Voltaire's later essay, *Le Philosophe ignorant* (1766), in *Mélanges* (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1961), 859 ff.

17. See the footnote to line 75 of Voltaire's poem. On the question of the void, see Aristotle, *Physics*, IV, 213b30–216b22; Descartes, *The Principles of Philosophy*, II, Principles xvi–xviii; Voltaire, *Philosophical Letters*, 14 and 15 ("On Descartes and Newton" and "On the System of Attraction").

18. Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), author of the widely read *Historical and Critical Dictionary* (1697), the *Letter on the Comet, Miscellaneous Thoughts on the Comet*, and *Responses to Questions from a Provincial*, was interpreted as attempting to prove that an atheistic society is possible. Leibniz, whose optimist cosmology Rousseau broadly endorses, presented this argument in *The Theodicy* to counter Bayle's skepticism. Rousseau similarly opposes Bayle's position on the purely secular society in "The Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar," *Émile*, IV (Bloom, 266–313). Nevertheless, even while championing optimism, Rousseau paradoxically seems to share with Voltaire something of Bayle's skepticism. See Rousseau's *Letter to Philopolis* (129 below), where Rousseau qualifies the relationship between his own views and those of Pope and Leibniz. Compare Leibniz, *Theodicy*, I, 7 and 8, and *Causa Dei*; see also William H. Barber, *Leibniz in France: From Arnaud to Voltaire, a Study in French Reactions to Leibnizianism, 1670–1760* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955).

19. *Poem on the Disaster of Lisbon*, Voltaire's footnote to line 75. Compare Pope, *An Essay on Man*, Epistle I, 30–35 and 235–294. For a similar allusion in ancient thought, see Homer, *Iliad*, VIII, 18 and Plato, *Theaetatus*, 153d.

20. Voltaire's note to his Preface to the *Poem on the Disaster of Lisbon*.

21. Ibid. The examples are given by Voltaire at lines 97–100.

22. Codrus, the last king of Athens, saved Attica from the Dorian invasion. The Dorians had been told by the oracle that they would conquer provided that they did not kill the Athenian King. Codrus, disguised as a peasant, entered the Dorian camp and provoked one of the soldiers to kill him.

Manlius Curtius was a legendary hero of Rome. According to the story, in 362 B.C. a great chasm appeared in the Roman Forum and the oracles declared it could only be filled by throwing into it what accounted for the city's strength. Declaring the strength of the city lay in a virtuous citizen, Curtius mounted his horse in full armor and leaped into the depths, whereupon the earth closed again.

The Roman consul Decius and his son, in separate incidents, sacrificed their lives in battle to assure Roman victories.

The Philaeni were two Carthaginian brothers who, in the course of boundary negotiations between their country and Cyrene, accepted the Cyrenian condition of agreeing to the frontier the brothers had established: namely that they be buried alive at the spot they had marked. The Carthaginians erected altars to their memory where they had died.

23. Voltaire's *Poem on the Disaster of Lisbon* is subtitled *On Examination of this Axiom: Everything Is Good.* Rousseau's exact wording is: " . . . au lieu de *Tout est bien*, il vaudrait peut-être mieux dire: *Le tout est bien*, ou *Tout est bien pour le tout.*

24. Alluding to Voltaire's Lockean theory that ideas must derive from sense perception, Rousseau makes use of this otherwise skeptical thesis for refuting Voltaire's "pessimistic" view of the whole. At the same time, Rousseau avails himself of Voltaire's published affirmations of theism as a means for deducing support for "optimism." Compare *Émile*, IV, "The Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar," where the Vicar derives God's providence from the idea of God, which in turn derives from the idea of the soul. Contrast Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, IV, with Plato, *Symposium*, 204b2–212a7 and *Timaeus* 37a4 ff as well as Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* I.1, VI, IX–X, and *Metaphysics*, Lambda, 1072b3–4. Concerning the difference between ancient and modern philosophy on this question, Rousseau sides with the moderns while attempting to vindicate Providence by harmonizing science and religion. On Leibniz's effort to synthesize the metaphysics of the ancients and the moderns, see Jacob Klein, *Leibniz: An Introduction* in *Lectures and Essays* (Annapolis, MD: St John's College Press, 1985), 197–217. See Joseph Cropsey, "The Whole as Setting for Man: On Plato's *Timaeus*," *Interpretation*, Vol. 2 (1971), 21–63.

25. Seneca, *De Providentia*, VI, 1.

26. Voltaire, *Zadig*, XX, "The Hermit."

27. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Lambda, 7.1072b20 and 9.1074b25–30. Plato, *Laws*, X, 885b, 888c sq, and XII, 948c. Compare Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, lxxvi to consider Rousseau's hint of unorthodoxy here.

28. Cicero, *De Senectute*, XXIII, 84. "Nature has willed that we be on earth as guests in passage, not as inhabitants." Cato the Elder is speaking. This is quoted in Erasmus, *Colloquies*, "The Godly Feast," 156.

29. On the feeling or sentiment of existence, see *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, V, as well as *Letters à Malesherbes* (Pléiade, I, 1137–1147).

30. Compare Hobbes's idea of felicity in *Leviathan*, I, xi, and Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, X, 1177a12 sq. See also Rousseau's *Emile*, IV (Pléiade, IV, 602 in relation to pp. 305–306, 340–341) and *Rêveries*, V.

31. Compare *Emile*, IV (Pléiade, IV, 592).

32. In one manuscript of the letter (MS. 2 at the Bibliothèque de Neuchâtel), Rousseau copied this gloss of Formey: "Mr. Rousseau is quite fortunate if he finds in the works of our free-thinking philosophers a complete confession of faith which puts his conscience under cover from all disquietude. But it is necessary to admit that these preceptors of the human race are ignorance itself in the case of religion." For Rousseau's remarks on the philosophers' esotericism in this regard, see *Observations* (*Collected Writings*, II, 45–46n).

33. In the manuscript cited in editorial note 32, the following words are crossed out: "as infinity, eternity, substance, matter, mind, necessity, contingency, and other words the like of which can never signify anything for us." See *Emile*, IV (Pléiade, IV, 552–553, 577).

34. See Diderot, *Pensées philosophiques*, XXI, and compare Rousseau's *Letter to*

Vernes, February 18, 1758 (*Correspondance générale*, III, 287); *Emile* IV (Pléiade, IV, 579), and Letter to Franquières (Pléiade, IV, 1139).

35. On materialism, see *Emile*, IV (Pléiade, IV, 574–586); for Rousseau's distinction between persuasion and conviction, see Christopher Kelly, "To Persuade without Convincing: The Language of Rousseau's Legislator," *American Journal of Political Science, 31* (May 1987): 321–335.

36. If motion is not essential to matter, then one might not have an infinite number of throws (consider the Cartesian concept of inertia within the context of Newtonian dynamics). This might point to the necessity of a doctrine of creation to explain motion, as in the case of the "Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar," although the vicar is ambivalent over the doctrine of Creation and denies he is a philosopher. (See *Emile*, IV [Pléiade, IV, 565, 576, 593].) If, on the other hand, motion is essential to matter, it is possible to speak of an infinity of throws, contrary to the teaching on creation but consistent with the view of order emerging from chaos. This is the position that Rousseau seems to take, similar to that of Diderot but different from that of the vicar.

37. This bracketed paragraph is not found in the extant manuscripts of Rousseau's letter but was published for the first time in 1861 in Streckeisen-Moltou's edition, *Oeuvres et correspondence inédites de J.-J. Rousseau*.

38. In his poem, Voltaire had of course argued against optimism. In the light of what follows, and because Voltaire is a leading *philosophe*, Rousseau seems to be speaking with thinly disguised irony. See editorial note 32 above. The mind of Voltaire the materialist is the author of the *Henriade*, to which Rousseau refers above.

39. See *Emile*, IV (Pléiade, IV, 632 ff, footnote).

40. See Hobbes, *Leviathan*, II, xxxi; *De Cive*, XV. See also *Social Contract*, IV, 8 and Plato, *Laws*, X, 889e and 909e as well as 886e.

41. See *Social Contract*, IV, 8. Also compare Hobbes, *Leviathan*, II, xxii ("Of Systems—Private Bodies Regular, but Unlawful").

42. The conclusion of this sentence corresponds to the published version of 1764, as based on the first draft of Manuscript 2 (cited in editorial note 32). In the manuscript, Rousseau replaced the last words of the sentence by: "which ought to please the author of Alzire." The version published in 1764 not only conforms with the original text but also alludes ironically to the skeptical view of the soul in Voltaire's *Dictionnaire philosophique*, also published in 1764.

43. As previously noted, Voltaire did not respond directly to Rousseau's suggestion. However, five years later, in 1761, Voltaire published *Candide*, in which he ridiculed optimism, and which Rousseau interpreted to be his reply. In 1762, Rousseau published *Emile* and *Social Contract*. In the first of these, he defends the idea of the goodness of nature and provides, in "The Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar," a statement of natural religion that is seemingly Rousseau's own "Catechism of Man." In the *Social Contract*, IV, 8, he provides a basis for the "Catechism of the Citizen." By asserting that such a work would be "the most useful book ever composed, and perhaps the only one necessary for men," Rousseau indicates his difference from the biblical tradition.

44. Rousseau seems to invite Voltaire to undertake the task of Plato, who concluded his career by writing *The Laws*, a work containing in Book X a teaching on civil and natural religion (which Avicenna called a "book of prophecy"). By contrast, Rousseau, who is himself so often compared to Plato, concluded his career with *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, not with a political work. Rousseau encourages the *mondain* Voltaire to take up the civil task, though he himself will fullfill it in the *Social Contract*. On the *Rêveries* as intended by Rousseau to be his last work, consider his remark concerning this project written on the *Cartes à Jouer* (Pléiade, I, 1165): "thus my book, if I continue it, ought naturally to end when I approach the end of my life." In this last book, Rousseau explains his happiness and thus his particular grounds for "optimism."

45. Voltaire was then living in retirement at Les Délices, overlooking Geneva and its lake, with a spectacular view of the Alps beyond. Dr. Theodore Tronchin (1709–1781), one of the well-known physicians of the time, was Voltaire's doctor. By this time, Rousseau himself had contracted the painful and incurable blockage of the urinary tract that was to afflict him for the remainder of his life. Not long after writing this letter, he was told by doctors that he could only expect to live a few months longer. Accordingly, though Rousseau was by eighteen years Voltaire's junior, he gives his reader the impression that as a consequence of this illness, he might discuss the question of death and providence in a manner reminiscent of the Elder Cato speaking to the young in Cicero's *De Senectute*. It is notable that Rousseau's literary references are to the Roman stoics rather than to the Bible.

46. See the end of the final version of Voltaire's *Poem on the Disaster of Lisbon*:

> Un calife autrefois, á son heure dernière,
> Au Dieu qu'il adorait dit pour toute prière:
> "Je t'apporte, ô seul roi, seul être illimité,
> Tout ce que tu n'as pas dans ton immensité,
> Les défauts, les regrets, les maux, et l'ignorance."
> Mais il pouvait encore ajouter, *l'espérance*.
>
> [A Caliphe of old, at his last hour,
> Said to God, whom he adored, for his only prayer:
> "I bring you, o only King, only unlimited Being,
> Everything that you do not have in your immensity,
> Defects, regrets, evils, and ignorance."
> But he could also have added: *hope*.]

For the original ending of Voltaire's poem, which is the one Rousseau received, see editorial note 4 above.

47. In Manuscript 2 (see editorial note 32 above), Rousseau closes with "I am with respect, Sir," Before arriving at this formula, Rousseau had concluded in these terms: "Believe, Sir, that I honor you at the bottom of my soul much more than your servants." On the other side appears the following: "Nothing is so cold as a letter where one speaks tranquilly and if one does not animate it by a little wit, it is intolerable reading."

EDITORS' NOTE, *Letter from Voltaire to Rousseau, September 12, 1756*

Translation by Terence E. Marshall. Based on the copy written in Rousseau's hand, Manuscript 7885, 109 (Bibliothèque de la Ville de Neuchâtel, Switzerland). See Dufour, ed., *Correspondence générale de J.-J. Rousseau* II, 200.

1. Rousseau notes here that "He has no longer written to me since that time."

EDITORS' NOTES, *Letter from Philopolis*

For the text, see Launay, II, 270–272 and Pléiade, III, 1383–1386.

1. This letter was written by Charles Bonnet (1720–1793), a naturalist from Geneva; it was dated August 25, 1755 and published in the *Mercure* in October of that year. On the importance of Bonnet in the history of evolutionary thought before Darwin, see Stephen Jay Gould, *Ontogeny and Phylogeny* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), Chapter 1. The pseudonym Philopolis means "lover of the city."

2. Charles LeBrun (1619–1690), founder of the Academy of Painting and Sculpture. Among other massive projects, he decorated the gallery of the Louvre.

3. *Second Discourse*, Part I, 23. As Rousseau indicates in his reply (131 below), the published version of this letter contained a misprint that changed the word for "healthy" (*sains*) to "saints" (*saints*).

EDITORS' NOTES, *Letter to Philopolis*

For the text, see Pléiade, III, 230–236 or Vaughan, I, 221–227.

This letter, which was found among Rousseau's papers at his death, was neither published nor sent.

1. Rousseau's use of the terms "general" and "particular" (or, as we would say, private) deserves attention because it foreshadows his transformation of the concept of the "general will" from a theological concept, referring to divine providence, into the political concept. See Introduction, xxiii–xxiv.

2. For an early draft of this paragraph, see Launay, II, 274.

3. In printing the text from "Philopolis," the *Mercury of France* had introduced a typographical error (125), writing *saints* (saints) for *sains* (healthy); Rousseau obviously considered this to be an intentional change on the author's part.

4. Seide was a character in Voltaire's tragedy *Mohamet* (1741); Thyeste one in Crébillon's *Atrée et Thyeste* (1707).

5. It is worth emphasizing that here Rousseau identifies himself with the teaching that "man is naturally good" (as distinguished from the popular carica-

ture, for which there is no textual evidence, of a defense of the "noble savage"). See Introduction, xiv–xv.

EDITORS' NOTES, *Observations of Charles-Georges LeRoy*

The full text of the *Observations* and Rousseau's replies is found in Meier, 482–488. Rousseau's replies can also be found in Pléiade, III, 237.

Charles-Georges Le Roy (1723–1789) was a well-known biologist who was in charge of the gardens at Versailles and a contributor to the *Encyclopedia*. These observations were forwarded to Rousseau by Condillac, who informed Rousseau that Buffon agreed with the objections and may even have been their source (*Correspondance complète*, IV, 98 ff, September 7, 1756, no. 434). Although Rousseau's replies have been frequently transcribed (Vaughan, I, 512–513; Pléiade, IV, 423–425; Intégrale, II, 275), Le Roy's objections are not widely known.

1. In the numbering of the original edition, this is note (*a.) (see 70–71 above).

2. Principal variants in Rousseau's manuscript are in brackets.

3. Rousseau's emphasis on the importance of climate in the "state of nature" has been confirmed dramatically by recent students of hominid evolution. Although the evidence concerning the likely ecological conditions in Africa, in which the australopithecines and early representatives of the genus Homo emerged, does not suggest a forest environment like that described in the First Part of the *Discourse*, the African savannah falls within the range indicated in this comment. See Richard E. Leakey and Roger Lewin, *Origins* (New York: Dutton, 1977).

4. Note (*6.) (above, 73–74).

5. Rousseau's view that there are natural "rules" relating foraging strategies to social behavior has been amply confirmed by contemporary behavioral ecologists and sociobiologists. See Edward O. Wilson, *Sociobiology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975); David Barash, *Sociobiology and Behavior*, 2nd ed. (New York: Elsevier, 1982); and, for primates, Robin I. M. Dunbar, *Primate Social Systems* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988).

6. Note (*10.) (above, 86–90).

7. Rousseau did not write a separate answer to this Observation, perhaps contenting himself with the last two sentences of his reply to LeRoy's second Observation. In any event, Rousseau's criticism of Locke in Note *10 is confirmed by contemporary observations of the orangutan, the nonhuman primate living in an ecological setting most nearly comparable to that described in the First Part of the *Second Discourse* : frugivores living in a setting of abundant and widely distributed food sources and not vulnerable to predators do not, in effect, form lasting pair bonds. See Biruté Galdikas-Brindamour, "Orangutans, Indonesia's 'People of the Forests,'" *National Geographic*, *148* (1975): 444–473.

EDITORS' NOTES TO "Natural Right"

For the text, we have followed Vaughan, I, 429–433. This article, written by Diderot but unsigned, appeared in Volume V of the *Encyclopédie* (which was published in November 1755), pages 115–16.

1. See *Geneva Manuscript*, I, ii (Masters, II, 160).
2. See *Political Economy*, below, 145.

EDITORS' NOTES TO *Political Economy*

For the text, see Pléiade, III, 241–278. Originally, this translation was based on the text in Vaughan, I, 247–273. After its publication in the *Encyclopédie*, V, 337–349 (which appeared in November 1755), this text was subsequently published—apparently without Rousseau's consent—as *Discourse on Political Economy* (Geneva: Emanuel DuVillard, 1758). It is generally assumed that Rousseau wrote it after completing the *Second Discourse* in 1754. The notebook containing Rousseau's fragmentary first draft has been deciphered and published (Launay, II, 294–305). Both a citation in this manuscript (ibid., 295, note 152) and explicit references in the final version (see editorial notes 9 and 12 below) indicate that Rousseau knew Diderot's article on *Natural Right*; Diderot's concept of a "general will of the human species" thus seems to have inspired both *Political Economy* and *Geneva Manuscript* (the first draft of othe *Social Contract*). But whereas the latter text explicitly criticizes Diderot's use of the term "general will," here Rousseau merely accepts the idea of a "general will" and adapts it to his purpose. As Derathé has noted, this difference may result from the focus of *Political Economy,* which is devoted to the administration or execution of laws by the government rather than to the principle underlying sovereignty (Pléiade, III, lxxiv–lxxvii) But in 1754–55, Diderot was both editor of the *Encyclopédie* and Rousseau's friend; hence, it may simply be that Rousseau sought to avoid an open criticism of Diderot's article in this context. Although *Political Economy* is significant as Rousseau's first published exposition speaking of the "general will," it is probably even more important as a presentation of his distinction between the people as "sovereign" and the "government" as executor of the laws. As one editor concluded, "It would hardly be too much to say that the whole political theory of Rousseau, on its more abstract side, was already formed when he wrote the *Economie politique*" (Vaughan, I, 230). Although there are several passages which appear both in this article and in the *Geneva Manuscript,* it does not follow that the latter was written first; see editorial note 2 below.

1. A cross-reference to the article of this name in the *Encyclopédie*. As Derathé points out (Pléiade, III, 1390), Rousseau himself subsequently presented his own views on "domestic economy" in the novel *Julie, ou la Nouvelle Héloïse,* especially IV, x–xi and V, ii–iii (Pléiade, II, 440–488, 527–585).
2. This paragraph, and the four that follow (to " . . . human wisdom has ever

made ten men capable of governing their fellow men") also appear in *Geneva MS,* I, v (paragraphs three through seven). It is quite possible that the *Geneva Manuscript* borrowed the already published text of *Political Economy,* and not vice versa (consider Pléiade, III, 1390–1391, note 1 to p. 242). On Rousseau's rejection of paternal authority as a ground for political right, see also *Second Discourse* Second Part (57–58).

3. In the posthumous edition of Rousseau's works (1782), the following passage is added at this point: "The power of the father over his children, founded on their private advantage, cannot by its nature extend to the right of life and death; but the sovereign power, which has no other object than the common good, has no other limits than those of the public utility, properly understood: a distinction that I will explain in its proper place." (Pléiade, III, 1390). Rousseau doubtless refers to *Social Contract,* especially II, iv–v; see *Social Contract,* (Masters, II, editorial note 50).

4. On Rousseau's conception of inequality between males and females, compare "Sophie, ou la femme" in *Emile,* V (Bloom, 357–406), especially 361: "When woman complains on this score about unjust man-made inequality [of duties related to sex], she is wrong. This inequality is not a human institution—or, at least, it is the work not of prejudice, but of reason. It is up to the sex that nature has charged with the bearing of children to be responsible for them to the other sex. Doubtless it is not permitted to anyone to violate his faith, and every unfaithful husband is an unjust and barbarous man. But the unfaithful wife does more; she dissolves the family and breaks all the bonds of nature . . . " On the contrast between Plato's argument for the equality of the sexes and Rousseau's contrary view, see Masters, *Political Philosophy of Rousseau,* 21–27, 98–105.

5. In the edition of 1782, the last clause was changed to read: ". . . happy, their rights could not come from the same source nor could the same rules of conduct be suited to both." (Pléiade, III, 1391)

6. In the edition of 1782, this sentence was changed to read: ". . . since Aristotle himself, who adopts it in certain places in his *Politics,* judges it appropriate to criticize it in others." (Pléiade, III, 1392). Compare *Politics,* I, i, 1252a (ed. Barker, 1)—rejecting the analogy of statesman and father—with I, xii, 1259b; (32–33); III, vi, 1278b (111–113); III, xiv, 1285b (139–140); and *Nicomachean Ethics,* VIII, x, 1160b-1161a (ed. Ostwald, 234–235). The two critics of Filmer mentioned in the preceding sentence are John Locke (*First Treatise of Government*) and Algernon Sidney (*Discourse Concerning Government*).

7. Rousseau refers to articles that were to appear in subsequent volumes of the *Encyclopédie.* But because Diderot did not complete the editorial work on this immense project until 1761, and the volumes at the end of the alphabet were not published until 1765–66, it is not clear whether Rousseau referred to manuscripts of the entries under *Politics* and *Sovereignty* or simply anticipated their inclusion. On the importance of Rousseau's distinction between the government and the sovereign, see *Social Contract,* III, i, and Masters, II, editorial note 68, as well as Introduction, 14–24. For the "common comparison" in the next paragraphs, compare *Social Contract,* III, xi, and Hobbes, *Leviathan,* Author's Introduction (ed. Oakeshott, 5).

8. Rousseau here refers to Diderot's article on *Natural Right* (above, 135–139) as the "source" of his concept of the "general will." Rousseau, however, modifies Diderot's conception in a fundamental way: compare Introduction (xxii–xxiii) and *Geneva Manuscript,* I, ii (and Masters, II, editorial notes 8, 10, and 11 citing Diderot). Some commentators have questioned whether Rousseau was actually inspired to use the term "general will" by Diderot (Pléiade, III, 1394–1395). It is, however, perfectly plausible—especially since this sentence was deleted from the editions of 1758 and 1782 (Vaughan, I, 242), presumably reflecting Rousseau's break with Diderot. On Rousseau's relations with Diderot, see the balanced account in Arthur M. Wilson's remarkable *Diderot* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

9. On the "group theory" of politics presented in the foregoing paragraph, see *Social Contract*, III, ii (Masters, II, 82–83). Rousseau's conclusion that "the voice of the people is in fact the voice of God" (*vox populi vox dei*) is more than a restatement of the old Roman precept; it also reflects Rousseau's rejection of any revealed religion that presumes that God speaks to some individuals rather than to others (see *Letter to Voltaire*, August 18, 1756 (119–120), and compare the Second Part of the "Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar," *Emile,* IV (Pléiade, IV, 607–635).

10. Compare Cicero, *De Re Publica,* I, xxvii.43–xxviii.44 (ed. Keyes, 69–71); *Second Discourse*, Dedication (5–6); and *Social Contract,* III, iii (Masters, II, 83–84 and editorial note 79).

11. Diderot had written: "Alas, virtue is so beautiful that thieves respect its image even deep within their lairs." (above, 138). In the posthumous edition of 1782, the parenthetical reference to Diderot's article on *Natural Right* was deleted (Vaughan, I, 244); compare editorial note 8 above.

12. For Rousseau's judgment of Machiavelli, see *Social Contract,* III, vi (Masters, II, 88).

13. The following passage, up to the words ". . . and not to be in contradiction with himself," appears in *Geneva Manuscript,* I, vii (Masters, II, 177–178). Note especially the phrase "to force them to punish themselves when they do what they did not want" and compare *Social Contract,* I, vii (Masters, II, 55 and editorial note 37).

14. Plato, *Laws,* IV, 719e–724a. On the ineffectiveness of punishment, compare *Second Discourse,* Second Part (62–63); *Social Contract,* II, v (Masters, II, 64–65); and the educational proposals in *Emile,* II (Pléiade, IV, 299–324, 335, et passim). Rousseau's critical remarks in this paragraph can also be read, however, as an attack on the legal procedures of the *ancien régime.* As an example of what Rousseau may have had in mind, consider the following account of the famous Calas case, which occurred a few years later:

Marc-Antoine Calas, a member of a devout Huguenot family in Toulouse, was a moody young man who met a violent death, almost certainly by his own hand. The authorities persisted in the attempt to prove that he had been a secret convert to Catholicism, for which, they alleged, he was murdered by his fanatical Calvinist family. As a result the father, Jean Calas, a man sixty-four years old, was adjudged guilty and on 9 March, 1762 was broken on the wheel and then strangled

by the public executioner. Research has now revealed that the outburst of fear and hysteria that led to the tragedy of Calas was really caused by apprehension in Toulouse lest the Calvinists take advantage of the Seven Years' War in order to revolt. (Wilson, *Diderot,* 441.)

15. Compare *Social Contract,* II, vii–xi and III, viii (Masters, II, 67–76, 92–95). On the word "morals" (i.e., mores or customs), used to translate the French *moeurs,* cf. Masters, II, 152 (editorial note 128).

16. Compare *Social Contract,* II, iii (Masters, II, 61–62).

17. Rousseau's emphasis on "virtue" in the *First Discourse* often seems to suffer from the absence of any definition of the term beyond the remark that it is "the strength and vigor of the soul" (*Collected Writings,* I, 6). The definition offered here could thus be seen as the link between Rousseau's attack on the moderns in the *Discourses* and the presentation of his own political principles in the *Social Contract.* Compare *Geneva Manuscript,* II, iv: "the habit that disposes us to practice these acts [that contribute to the "greatest good of all"], even to our own disadvantage, is what is called strength or virtue." (Masters, II, 191). On virtue as strength or force of soul, see also *Emile,* V (Bloom, 445–46).

18. At this point, the edition of 1782 adds a quotation from St. Augustine's Letters: "'Sicuti enim est aliquando misericordia puniens, ita est crudelita parcens' *Aug. Epist.* 54." (Pléiade, III, 1397). "Just as sometimes pity can punish, so cruelty can pardon."

19. Rousseau here alludes to Cato's suicide (which had been criticized by some modern writers, including Montesquieu). The comparison between Socrates and Cato, developed in this paragraph, was apparently of considerable importance to Rousseau, as is shown by some recently published manuscripts in which he compares the two. See Claude Pichois and René Pintard, *Jean-Jacques entre Socrate et Caton* (Paris: José Corti, 1972), especially, 97–99.

20. So much for the charge that Rousseau was a totalitarian. On the role of patriotism, see *Considerations on the Government of Poland,* especially iii (ed. Watkins, 167–176) and *Constitutional Project for Corsica,* Part 1 (ed. Watkins, 280–281). These two works are very useful to compare to *Political Economy,* as they provide concrete instances of Rousseau's application of his own thought to what is today called "public policy."

21. At this point, the text in the *Encyclopédie* adds: "See EDUCATION." However, an erratum to Volume V indicated that the cross-reference should be deleted, and it does not appear in the edition of 1758 (Pléiade, III, 1402). Rousseau's stress on public education is all the more remarkable because such educational systems did not generally exist until the nineteenth century. On public education, see *Considerations on the Government of Poland,* chap. iv (ed. Watkins, 176–181); *Emile,* I (Pléiade, IV, 250–251); and *First Discourse,* Part 2, (*Collected Writings,* II, 18n).

22. "Since the things that can become property are only useful to men while they are alive and since the dead have no more role in the affairs of this world, it was not necessary for the establishment of property to extend to giving the owner the right to choose whom he wants to succeed to the goods he leaves on dying. It was sufficient that each dispose of his goods during his life, leaving to those

who survive him the care of doing what they would judge appropriate when he was no longer alive." Pufendorf, *Droit de la nature et des gens,* IV, x, § 4 (cited in Pléiade, III, 1403).

23. "There are seven ways in general to get money for public finances, in which are included all that can be imagined . . . As to the first, which is public domain, it seems to be the most honest and most assured of all." Bodin, *Les Six livres de la République* (cited in Pléiade, III, 1404). On the responsibility of the "founder of a republic" to establish public revenues, compare *Social Contract,* II, vii.

24. "It nourishes and enriches." As Derathé points out, Rousseau's position is the opposite of the "physiocrats" like Quesnay, who favored free trade instead of public granaries (Pléiade, III, 1404–1405). On Rousseau's attitude toward Geneva, see *Social Contract* (Masters II, 133, editorial note 7).

25. In the edition of 1758 and thereafter, Rousseau adds: "It was only at the siege of the Veii that the Roman infantry began to be paid." (Pléiade, III, 1405). On Rousseau's preference for a citizen army—and his hostility to mercenaries—compare Machiavelli, *The Prince,* xiii (ed. Musa, 111–117); *Social Contract,* III, xv; *Considerations on the Government of Poland,* xii (ed. Watkins, 236–245); and especially *Final Reply* (*Collected Writings*, II, 118; Pléiade, III, 82): "War is sometimes a duty and is not made to be a profession. Every man must be a soldier for the defense of his freedom, nobody should be one to invade that of another. And to die in the service of one's Fatherland is too noble a task to be confided to mercenaries."

26. See Bodin, *Les Six livres de la République*, VI, ii (cited Pléiade, III, 1406). The manuscript fragment containing the first draft of this passage reads:

> This truth that taxes cannot be established—legitimately—except by the consent of the people or its representatives has been generally acknowledged by all the—philosophers and—jurists (such as Grotius–Locke–Pufendorf) who have acquired any reputation in matters of political right, (if there are any) *some like Bodin* have (given the prince the right to raise taxes on his authority . . .) established maxims that appear contrary . . . (Launay, II, 303–304)

Note that in both the draft and final text, Rousseau uses the phrase "the people or its representatives" and compare *Social Contract*, III, xv (Masters, II, 101–104 and editorial note 105).

27. "The tax by head is most natural to slavery; the tax on merchandise is most natural to freedom, because it is related in a less direct manner to the individual person." *L'Esprit des lois*, XIII, xiv (ed. Caillois, 1678). As Derathé points out (Pléiade, III, 1406–1407), Rousseau twists Montesquieu's "the tax on merchandise" (*impôt sur les marchandises*). More broadly, it is of interest to compare Montesquieu's argument throughout Book XIII with *Political Economy*—and especially with Rousseau's proposal for a progressive income tax in the following passage.

28. Rousseau refers to Chardin's *Voyages en Perse* (4 vols.; Amsterdam, 1735)—a work that he cites at length in *Social Contract*, III, viii (Masters, II, 93–94). On Herodotus, see *Histories*, III, 89:

[Darius, after becoming King] divided his dominions into twenty governments, called by the Persians satrapies; and doing so and appointing governors, he ordained that each several nation should pay him tribute . . . In the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses after him there was no fixed tribute, but payment was made in gifts. It is by reason of this fixing of tribute, and the other like ordinances, that the Persians called Darius the huckster, Cambyses the master, and Cyrus the father; for Darius made a pretty profit out of everything, Cambyses was harsh and arrogant, Cyrus was merciful and ever wrought for their well-being. (Trans. A. D. Godley, 4 vols. [London: Loeb Classical Library, 1921], II, 117)

Rousseau's apparently innocent citation is thus an implicit criticism of monarchy and empire.

29. Compare *Political Economy,* editorial note 26 and the references there cited (204).

30. Rousseau again refers to Bodin, *Les Six livres de la République*, VI, ii: "Thus most imposers and inventors of new taxes have lost their lives at it" (cited Pléiade, III, 1409). As one critic has put it, this last paragraph "is a finished piece of irony" (Vaughan, I, 273).

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UNIVERSITY PRESS OF NEW ENGLAND publishes books under its own imprint and is the publisher for Brandeis University Press, Brown University Press, University of Connecticut, Dartmouth College, Middlebury College Press, University of New Hampshire, University of Rhode Island, Tufts University, University of Vermont, and Wesleyan University Press.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. 1712–1778.
[Selections. English. 1992]
Discourse on the origins of inequality (second discourse) ; Polemics ; and, Political economy / Jean-Jacques Rousseau ; edited by Roger D. Masters and Christopher Kelly ; translated by Judith R. Bush . . . [et al.].
p. cm.—(The Collected writings of Roussau ; vol. 3)
Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
ISBN 0–87451–603–X
1. Equality. 2. Natural law. 3. Political science. 4. Economics. I. Masters, Roger D. II. Kelly, Christopher, 1950–. III. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 1712–1778. Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes. English. 1992. IV. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 1712–1778. Discours sur l'économie politique. English. 1992. V. Title. VI. Series: Rousseau, Jean-Jacques, 1712–1778. Works. English. 1990 ; vol. 3.
P2034.A3 1990 vol. 3
[JC179]
320.1'1—dc20 92–53866